

J. M. BARRIE

♣ ♣ ♣ AND


HIS BOOKS



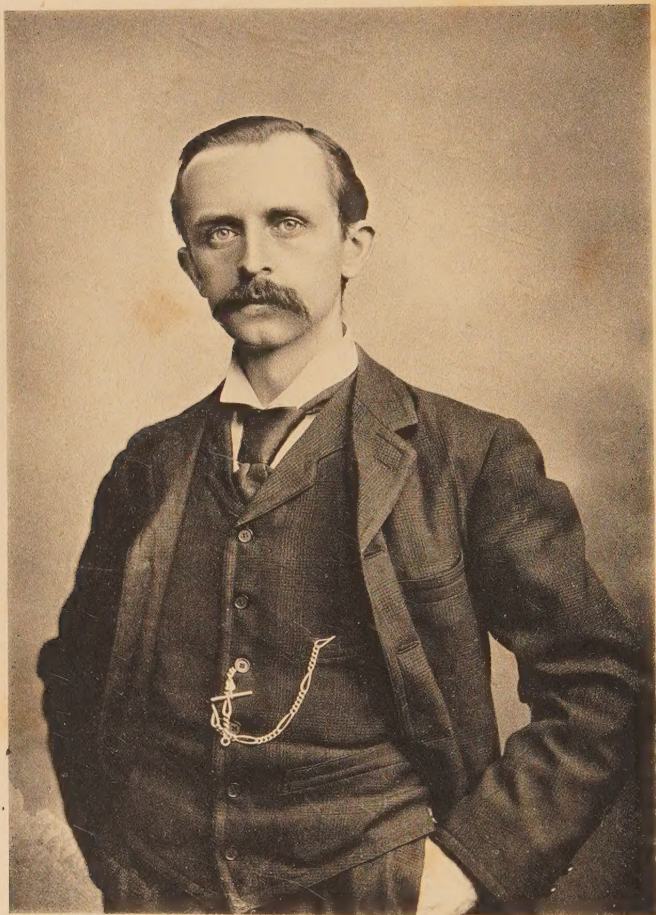
J. A. HAMMERTON



J. M. BARRIE



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J. M. Barrie

J. M. BARRIE

AND HIS BOOKS

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES

BY

J. A. HAMMERTON



LONDON

HORACE MARSHALL & SON

1902



To
FREDERICK A. ATKINS,

MY IDEAL EDITOR

AND

MY VERY GOOD FRIEND,

I INSCRIBE

THIS LITTLE BOOK

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INTRODUCTORY

INTRODUCTORY

THE purpose of this little book is perhaps sufficiently evident on the face of it; yet the author may be allowed to state briefly what he has aimed at supplying, in case it should be that he has not succeeded in the task which he set himself.

In the first place, I have carefully avoided any attempt at a formal biography of Mr Barrie, although there is no phase of his career, so far as that interests the reading public, which is not touched upon in the course of the following chapters. I have as carefully refrained from attempting a comprehensive critical survey of all his works. My aim has been to produce a volume which admirers of Mr Barrie's books may read with interest and perhaps with some degree of profit, while those who are only imperfectly, or not at all, acquainted with his contributions to the library of contemporary literature may find herein an introduction to a delightful field of study.

The idea of the book came to me some four years ago, when, as Editor of the *Nottingham Express and Journal* and following the contribution of an article describing "J. M. Barrie's Early Days in Journalism" to the *Temple Magazine* (then admirably edited by Mr F. A. Atkins), I received so many re-

quests for biographical and bibliographical data concerning Mr Barrie that it occurred to me some such work as that now presented to the reader would at least fulfil a useful office if it did no more than supply young men and women with material for "Literary Society" essays on Barrie and his Books. Thus, it was with no ambitious purpose I began and it is with no ambitious aim that I have ended these "Biographical and Critical Studies."

Naturally enough Mr Barrie's sharpest critics have been they of his own country. He has from the first encountered singularly little adverse criticism, but the bulk of that with which he has met has come from Scottish writers. Even in "Thrums" he is not a hero to all his townsfolk. An old woman there was asked what she thought of his books. "Perfect buff," she replied; "the work of an impident young smatchet." But, of course, we don't go to the sweetie-wife for literary criticism. The present writer, however, is at once a devoted admirer of Mr Barrie, a "brither Scot," and a journalist whose fate it has been to spend a part of his editorial life in the interesting old town where Barrie first practised journalism for a living, and, indeed, on the newspaper which perpetuates the title of that on which the novelist was engaged. In my moments of sinful ambition I am even tempted to regard myself as having been in Nottingham one of Barrie's successors, just as Mattie was a cousin to the Laird of Limmerfield — "seven times removed."

I have seen it argued that the publication of such a book as this is a reprehensible practice, in that it implies the elevation of its subject to the rank of a classic. "This treatment of contemporary writers as classics should not be encouraged," quoth a weighty critic in one of the Saturdays. A sufficient answer to the charge would seem to be that in such writers as J. M. Barrie, Thomas Hardy, "Ian Mac-laren," Rudyard Kipling, and several others, the public that reads books is vastly more interested than it is in the mighty dead. It is true, no doubt, that we are better able to catalogue as classics the books that were written a hundred years ago than those new from their authors, and a hundred years hence Posterity may, with its usual obtuseness, have docketed in oblivion the great books of to-day. We cannot anticipate the judgment of Posterity any more than we can make it respect our own. But he were a foolish man who wrote with the ghost of Posterity ever at his elbow, and since the great passions of the human heart have been the same in all ages, it is a wiser plan to appeal to the heart of living man, for surely if an author is once admitted there he may have small concern for his standing in the ages yet to come. Thinking thus, it seems to me that a contemporary author of Mr Barrie's acknowledged eminence is a worthy subject for any writer, be the medium a newspaper, a magazine, or a book. The only doubt in my mind is that this little effort of mine may be voted unworthy of its subject.

It will be noticed that I do not deal in any place

with Mr Barrie as a playwright. As an old student of the acted drama I have no compunction in expressing the opinion that, despite the wonderful success of "The Little Minister" on the stage, Mr Barrie is not, and is not likely to be, a serious factor in the contemporary drama. Indeed, "The Little Minister," as it is known to playgoers, is a very sorry production compared with the book, compared with anything the author has written, and therefore one could not honestly write in praise of it. Though he may have received from the stage £1000 for every £100 which his books have produced, that does not prove him a dramatist, and indeed both "The Little Minister" and "Walker, London," were popular for reasons which lay quite outside of the playwright's art. His more serious effort at play-writing, "Richard Savage" (in collaboration with Mr H. B. Marriot Watson), produced on the 16th April, 1891, was a failure. It is as the author of "Auld Licht Idylls" and "A Window in Thrums" that he is loved by the English-reading public throughout the world; his genius can best be shaped in books and not in plays. Hence my reason for ignoring his stage-work. I may be blamed for this, but I fancy the weight of opinion will be with me, though I have a shrewd suspicion that Mr Barrie himself is as "sinfully puffed up" about his plays as T'nowhead was about his pig; for his early newspaper writings show a strong taste for things theatrical.

As I do not give a chronological account of Mr

Barrie's career, I should here state that James Matthew Barrie (he says it is so long since he spelt his middle name that he can't remember whether or not there are two t's in it) was born at Kirriemuir, N.B., on the 9th of May, 1860. He married Miss Mary Ansell, a charming actress who made her mark in his own "Walker, London," at Kirriemuir, in July, 1894. The match was quite a little romance.

It should be added that several of the chapters which follow appeared originally in magazines, but all have been revised and in some cases considerably extended since their first publication.

My thanks are due to Mr R. K. Dent, the accomplished Librarian of the Aston Manor Public Library, Birmingham, and the historian of the Midland city, for his valuable assistance in compiling "Barriana" and the Bibliography, also to Messrs Hodder & Stoughton, and to Messrs Cassell & Co., Ltd., for their kind permission to make extracts from Mr Barrie's books published by them.

COLLEGE DAYS



J. M. BARRIE

COLLEGE DAYS

THE early life of those who achieve greatness in any of the arts is always the most interesting to the readers of biography; and naturally so, for it is in their younger years that great authors—great artists of all kinds—are formed. The accident of early environment has much to do with the shaping and directing of genius. True, genius, which is antecedent to knowledge and experience, rises in the end above all circumstances; but the man who has genius is probably more influenced by the surroundings of his early life than he who boasts nothing worthier than talent; the artistic temperament is always the most keenly sympathetic. Hence, if life be indeed what Herbert Spencer terms “corresponding to environment,” the man of genius lives to the full and awakens to life earlier than common men. For this reason the early years of our great authors must always be a source of profound interest to students of their works, and from their demeanour during so critical a period we may learn many things to assist us in the fuller understanding of their subsequent work.

Among the literary men of the present day there is none who has been more personal in his writings than Mr Barrie : he is as personal in prose as Byron was in poetry. His own heart, his own experiences, the lives of his "ain folk" : these have been the subjects out of which his genius has made literature. In a sense, every book he has written has been a further instalment of a masterly autobiography. Even in his smallest efforts he is writing only of the things he knows, the things he has seen and felt. Yes, even in the whimsical mood of his early journalistic writings there was still in his literary clowning a touch of sober self-revelation. So it is no difficult task in his case to get at the man through his work. But to those early days with which, for the moment, we are particularly concerned, we have a ready guide in his little *brochure*, *An Edinburgh Eleven*, and his newspaper contributions.

An Edinburgh Eleven was published in the days when Mr Barrie still occasionally used the *nom de plume* of "Gavin Ogilvy," and although it is only a trifle it is by no means destitute of those brilliant qualities of style which in later years were to be so distinguishing a feature of all his finest work. Its sub-title is *Pencil Portraits from College Life*—"pencil" being used, I suppose, to suggest the sketchy nature of the likenesses—and it is chiefly interesting to-day as introducing us to the men who influenced the author in his college career, while the frequent glimpses of his life in venerable Edinburgh are also valuable to the biographer.

Aberdeen is the University to which the young men of Thrums who dream dreams and strive manfully for their fulfilment generally make their way. Many a tale has been told of the desperate straits of the students at that temple of learning, and many a story of plain living and high thinking there has never been told beyond the poor walls of the struggling student's little "bed-sitting-room." Barrie makes frequent allusions in his books to Aberdeen as the University town to which all ambitious youths in his countryside turned their eyes, and the hardships of those who fought poverty bravely in their determination to secure a University training naturally impressed his young mind. One of his favourite stories, which has crept into more than one of his books if I am not mistaken, is given as follows in a contribution of his to the *Nottingham Journal*:—

"I knew three undergraduates who lodged together in a dreary house at the top of a dreary street, two of whom used to study until two in the morning, while the third slept. When they shut up their books, they woke number three, who arose, dressed, and studied till breakfast-time. Among the many advantages of this arrangement, the chief was that, as they were dreadfully poor, one bed did for the three. Two of them occupied it at one time, and the third at another. Terrible privations? Frightful destitution? Not a bit of it. The Millennium was in those days. If life was at the top of a hundred steps, if students occasionally died of hunger and

hard work combined, if the midnight oil only burned to show a ghastly face 'weary and worn,' if lodgings were cheap and dirty, and dinners few and far between, life was still real and earnest, in many cases it did not turn out an empty dream."

Together with another distinguished native of Kirriemuir (Dr Alexander Whyte, of Free St George's, Edinburgh), Mr Barrie's brother studied at Aberdeen, but it was to Edinburgh that the novelist went when the time and the means for entering upon his college career had arrived. He was then eighteen years of age. Only a part of his boyhood had been spent in Kirriemuir. At an early age he had gone south to Dumfries, where his brother was then inspector of schools. At the Dumfries Academy he had a very ordinary course of training, the only one of his teachers who is said to have impressed him perceptibly being Dr Cranstoun, well-known for his translations of the Latin poets. Even thus early his journalistic instinct was at work, as one of his first published articles was on Gretna Green in the *English Illustrated Magazine*. But at Dumfries the youthful Barrie had the good fortune to see in the flesh Thomas Carlyle, who often came to the town in those days on visits to his sister, Mrs Aitken, and his friend Thomas Aird, the editor and poet. No doubt this local connection with the sage had something to do with sending the youth to the study of Carlyle's works, and he forthwith became a fervid disciple. He told the following story of Carlyle in an early *St James's* article—a

story, by the way, which is further testimony to the dour, unlovable nature of the grim philosopher:—

“There are many pretty villas in Dumfries, but none more charming than that where Mrs Aitken, Carlyle’s sister, resides. Here we have seen him of a forenoon, wide-awake firmly planted on his head and a sturdy staff in his hand, taking no more notice of the passers-by who uncovered their heads than of the irreverent ones who whistled. It is told in Dumfries that, taking a solitary walk one day near his sister’s house, he encountered two disciples who thirsted to hold communion with the master. They knew that Carlyle loved not to hold intercourse with such as they, but, being men of quick invention, accosted him as one who would perhaps kindly tell them how far distant they were from Locharbriggs. ‘Tam,’ as he is still called in Ecclefechan, lifted his staff, and, referring them with it to a milestone in the near vicinity, silently passed on.”

With the Carlyle fever on him—at one time he asserted that Carlyle was the only author who influenced him—he left Dumfries and went to Edinburgh University, where he almost immediately came under the influence of Professor Masson (now Emeritus). Young Barrie bringing with him a love of literature and a reverence for its makers, Masson was precisely the man to foster these tastes in his student, for never was a Professor of Literature more imbued with the duties of his office and enthusiasm for the subject which he taught. Barrie himself confesses that Masson sent his life off at a

new angle: "Though a man might, to my mind, be better employed than in going to College, it is his own fault if he does not strike on someone there who sends his life off at a new angle." So he says, and that someone in his case was Masson. "I seem to remember everything Masson said, and the way he said it." Surely no higher compliment could be paid to a master by an old scholar. How truly Masson's winning personality got hold of this student's heart may be gathered from the following passage:—

"There are men who are good to think of, and as a rule we only know them by their books. Something of our pride in life would go with their fall. To have one such Professor at a time is the most a University can hope of human nature, so Edinburgh need not expect another just yet. . . . The test of a sensitive man is that he is careful of wounding the feelings of others. Once, I remember, a student was reading a passage aloud, assuming at the same time such an attitude that the Professor could not help remarking that he looked like a teapot. It was exactly what he did look like, and the class applauded. But next moment Masson had apologised for being personal. Such reminiscences are what make the old Literature class-room to thousands of graduates a delight to think of."

Naturally to one of Barrie's mind, sitting at the feet of such a Gulliver in criticism—as he describes Masson—the only thing in the world worth living for seemed to be Literature, and to that end he—let

his hair grow ! But perhaps that is only his little joke. It affords him an excellent opportunity, however, for further testimony to Masson's popularity. As witness :—

“The students in that class liked to see their Professor as well as hear him. I let my hair grow long because it only annoyed other people, and one day there was dropped into my hand a note containing sixpence and the words : ‘The students sitting behind you present their compliments, and beg that you will get your hair cut with the enclosed, as it interferes with their view of the Professor.’ ”

In Masson's class our distinguished student took a high place, being *proxime accessit* for the Vans Dunlop Scholarship in English Literature.

He had the good fortune to get his Greek from that most picturesque of Edinburgh Professors—the late John Stuart Blackie. To come under the influence of that breezy character was like a breath of moorland air to any student, but Barrie was evidently wide awake to the little weaknesses of this great scholar. “I think I remember the Professor's saying that he had never made five shillings by his verses. To my mind they are worth more than that.” Here is the finest pen portrait of Blackie ever drawn in so few words :—

“Did you ever watch him marching along Princes Street on a warm day, when every other person was broiling in the sun ? His head is well thrown back, the staff, grasped in the middle, jerks back and forward like a weaver's shuttle, and the plaid flies in

the breeze. Other people's clothes are hanging limp. Blackie carries his breeze with him."

Blackie's kindness of heart is well illustrated in an anecdote which Barrie gives. "When the Professor noticed any physical peculiarity about a student, such as a lisp, or a glass eye, or one leg longer than the other, or a broken nose, he was at once struck by it, and asked him to breakfast. They were very lively breakfasts, the eggs being served in tureens; but sometimes it was a collection of the maimed and crooked, and one person at the table—not the host himself—used to tremble lest, making mirrors of each other, the guests should see why they were invited." Blackie used to advise his students to take a cold bath every morning at six o'clock. "In winter you can break the ice with a hammer." Only one enthusiast was known to take this advice. He died.

There were lively times in the Greek class. When Blackie would mention the name of "a distinguished politician," there was always a racket. "'I will say Beaconsfield,' he would exclaim (cheers and hisses). 'Beaconsfield' (uproar). Then he would stride forward, and, seizing the railing, announce his intention of saying Beaconsfield until every goose in the room was tired of cackling. ('Question.') 'Beaconsfield.' ('No, no.') 'Beaconsfield.' ('Hear, hear,' and shouts of 'Gladstone.') 'Beaconsfield.' ('Three cheers for "Dizzy."') Eventually the class would be dismissed as—(1) idiots, (2) a bear garden, (3) a

flock of sheep, (4) a pack of numskulls, (5) hissing serpents." Again, "he would knock a map down as if overcome with emotion, and at critical moments a student in the back benches would accompany him on a penny trumpet." But, these little diversions notwithstanding, his scholars learnt Greek from him, and perhaps something of manliness, which was even more valuable.

A bright sketch of Henry Calderwood, who was Professor of Moral Philosophy, and died in 1897, follows the memories of Blackie and his class-room. Calderwood is commended especially for his method of getting into touch with the mass of his students. The humorous side of the subject would appear to have appealed especially to Mr Barrie—at least it is this side of the class he presents to us. He strikes the bull's eye every time he picks out a typical incident illustrative of the humours of the class-room. One year there was in the class a youth with a squeaky voice and a stammer. "He sat on the back bench, and what he wanted to know was something about the infinite. Every discussion day he took advantage of a lull in the debate to squeak out, 'With regard to the infinite,' and then could never get any further. No one ever discovered what he wanted enlightenment on about the infinite. He grew despondent as the session wore on, but courageously stuck to his point. Probably he is a soured man now."

The picture of that youth with the squeaky voice

who always stuck in his question is one that sticks in the memory.

Calderwood in Barrie's time was foolish enough to play into the hands of his students by expressing the opinion that there was a great deal of moral philosophy in "The Dead March in Saul." After this many a budding philosopher would absent himself from the class and send a letter to say he was away listening to "The Dead March in Saul." The same amiable Professor was also in the habit of asking his students to his house, and would have his ladies' class to meet them. He saw the ladies into the cabs himself. "It is the only thing I ever heard against him," says the witty Barrie.

Professor Tait — now one of the Edinburgh veterans, for he accepted the chair of Natural Philosophy in 1860—was another of his teachers who commanded the sincere respect of Barrie the student. "Never, I think, can there be a more superb demonstrator." Again: "It comes as natural to his old students to say when they meet 'What a lecturer Tait was!' as to an Englishman to joke about the bagpipes." But one would gather from Barrie's reminiscences that it was Tait the superb lecturer rather than Tait the man who impressed him most, as he soon leaves the Professor to pursue other memories. On the corner of one of his college books he found a pencil note, which read, "Walls got 2s. for T. & T. at Brown's, 16 Walker Street." He goes on to explain: "I don't recall Walls, but T. & T. was short for

‘Thomson & Tait’s Elements of Natural Philosophy’ (Elements!), better known in my year as the ‘Student’s First Glimpse of Hades.’ Evidently Walls sold his copy, but why did I take such note of the address? I fear T. & T. is one of the Books Which Have Helped Me.”

We are left in some doubt as to whether our student was greatly engrossed with the study of Natural Philosophy, but there is ample evidence that he was busy studying human nature. His sketch of Lindsay, who assisted Tait in his experiments, is capital. What a splendid Scot, of the dour, dogged kind, he must have been! When an experiment would not come off, Tait would instruct Lindsay to take the apparatus to an anteroom; but Lindsay would take it to his seat, and in moments when he was not within range of the Professor’s eye he would potter away with the mechanism until whiz, bang, the thing was working—the experiment successful! Yet, when the class broke into a cheer Lindsay was sitting with folded arms. *Then* Lindsay would remove the machine to the anteroom, and no one ever knew whether he executed a little dance of triumph on the other side of the door. Good old Lindsay!

In Logic and Metaphysics Barrie studied under Professor Campbell Fraser—now an octogenarian and Emeritus Professor, so that even in Barrie’s day his was a venerable figure. He is very amusing in describing the struggles which his contemporaries had with the meshes of metaphysics. “The Professor glanced round slowly for an illustration,” he

says. "‘Am I a table?’ A pained look travelled over the class. Was it just possible that they were all tables? It is no wonder that the students who do not go to the bottom during the first month of metaphysics begin to give themselves airs strictly so called. In the privacy of their room at the top of the house they pinch themselves to see if they are still there."

He tells us a good deal about his own achievements in metaphysics. "As a metaphysician I was something of a disappointment. I began well, standing, if I recollect aright, in the three examinations, first, seventeenth, and seventy-seventh. . . . I was like the fountains in the quadrangle, which ran dry towards the middle of the session." Fraser is the editor of the great Berkeley that runs to so many ponderous volumes. Barrie confesses that he never tackled this *magnum opus*, but he read the small edition. "There was one man in my year who really began the large Berkeley, but after a time he was missing, and it is believed that some day he will be found flattened between the pages of the first volume." But Barrie had one metaphysical triumph. He convinced a medical student that he had no existence strictly so called. "He got quite frightened, and I can still see his white face as he sat staring at me in the gloaming. This shows what metaphysics can do."

Professor Chrystal came to the University in Barrie's time, and the novelist had his mathematics from him during his first year. Chrystal was a

terror to slow coaches. He set the pace with a vengeance, and many were they who failed to keep up with him. Barrie illustrates this characteristic by a little parable. There was once an elderly gentleman who read the *Times* every day from title to imprint. He was stricken with fever for a fortnight. When he recovered, he started reading the *Times* where he had left off, and struggled valiantly but unsuccessfully to catch up with the current issue. "This is an allegory for the way these students panted after Chrystal." One day a student dropped a marble, and it rolled down the class-room steps to the floor, where Chrystal stood with his back to the class, writing on the blackboard. "'Will the student at the end of bench ten, who dropped that marble, stand up?' All eyes dilated. He had counted the falls of the marble from step to step. Mathematics do not obscure the intellect."

But Barrie was evidently no more a success in mathematics than in metaphysics. He makes the following confession:—

"I had never a passion for knowing that when circles or triangles attempt impossibilities it is absurd; and x was an unknown quantity I was ever content to walk round about. To admit to Chrystal that we understood x was only a way he had of leading you on to y and z . I gave him his chance, however, by contributing a paper of answers to his first weekly set of exercises. When the hour for returning the slips came round, I was there to accept fame—if so it was to be—with modesty; and if it was to be

humiliation, still to smile. The Professor said there was one paper, with an owner's name on it, which he could not read, and it was handed along the class to be deciphered. My presentiment that it was mine became a certainty when it reached my hand ; but I passed it on pleasantly, and it returned to Chrystal, a Japhet that never found its father. Feeling that the powers were against me, I then retired from the conflict, sanguine that the teaching of my mathematical schoolmaster, the best that could be, would pull me through. The Disowned may be going the round of the class-room still."

The late Professor Sellar, who occupied the Chair of Humanity in Barrie's college days, is the only other University Professor who figures in his group, and the sketch of him is very slight. The others who go to make up the team of eleven are Lord Rosebery ("The first time I ever saw Lord Rosebery," says the imaginative Barrie, "was in Edinburgh when I was a student, and I flung a clod of earth at him. He was a peer ; those were my politics"), the late Joseph Thomson, well-known as an African explorer, R. L. Stevenson, and the Rev. Walter C. Smith, D.D. So that of his eleven heroes, only six are now alive.

Referring to Dr Walter Smith, the author of *Olrig Grange*, Barrie gives us this interesting reminiscence :—

"During the four winters another and I were in Edinburgh we never entered any but Free churches. This seems to have been less on account

of a scorn for other denominations than because we never thought of them. We felt sorry for the 'men' who knew no better than to claim to be on the side of Dr Macgregor. Even our Free kirks were limited to two, St George's and the Free High. After all, we must have been liberally-minded beyond most of our fellows, for, as a rule, those who frequented one of these churches shook their heads at the other. It is said that Dr Whyte and Dr Smith have a great appreciation of each other. They, too, are liberally-minded."

Dr Whyte, of course, is his famous townsman. Indeed, it is a moot question whether Kirriemuir folk are not more proud of having produced Dr Whyte than Dr Barrie—for, thanks to St Andrews University, Barrie is an LL.D., though the prefix does not commend itself to writers who have grown used to plain Mr Barrie, or Barrie without the Mr—one does not care to talk of Mr Kipling or Mr Hardy, any more than of Mr Shakespeare or Mr Dickens. Barrie was a member of Dr Whyte's Bible-class during his Edinburgh years.

Having thus briefly sketched the men who influenced the future novelist in his college days, we must not take leave of him at this interesting period of his life without learning from himself just a little more about the way in which some of his time was spent outside the classes. He was a member of the Debating Society. "We were the smallest society in the University (he writes), and the longest-winded, and I was once nearly expelled for not

paying my subscription. Our grand debate was, 'Is the policy of the Government worthy the confidence of this Society?' and we also read about six essays on 'The Genius of Robert Burns'; but it was on private business that we came out strongest. The question that agitated us most was whether the meetings should be opened with prayer, and the men who thought they should would not so much as look at the men who thought they should not."

He has a stringent memory for every quaint story of those delightful days. One of the best tells how a student outwitted the terrible Chrystal by a piece of splendid audacity. "It was in an M.A. exam., and the affrighted student found that he could not read his neighbour's notes. Trusting to fortune, he enclosed them with his own answers, writing at the top, 'No time to write these out in ink, so enclose them in pencil.' He got through; no moral."

Although the degree of comfort among the students at Edinburgh was considerably higher than at Aberdeen, there was a great amount of honest poverty then and may be still. Hence, the devices to keep "in funds" were sometimes more ingenious than successful. A scheme which was commended to Barrie's attention is thus humorously described by him: "In the beginning of the session you join the library, and soon you forget about your pound (the entrance fee, which may be withdrawn at any time): you reckon without it. As the winter closes in, and the coal-bunk empties; or you find that five shillings a week for lodgings is

a dream that cannot be kept up; or your coat assumes more and more the colour identified with spring; or you would feast your friends for once right gloriously; or next Wednesday is your little sister's birthday; you cower, despairing, over a sulky fire. Suddenly you are on your feet all aglow once more. What is this thought that sends the blood to your head? That library pound! You had forgotten you had a bank. Next morning you are at the University in time to help the library door to open. You ask for your pound; you get it. Your hand mounts guard over the pocket in which it rustles. So they say. I took their advice and paid in my money; then waited exultingly to forget about it. In vain. I always allowed for that pound in my thoughts. I saw it as plainly, I knew its every feature as a schoolboy remembers his first trout. Not to be hasty, I gave my pound two months, and then brought it home again. I had a fellow-student who lived across the way from me. We railed at the library theory at open windows over the life of the street; a beautiful dream, but mad, mad."

Ah! these were glorious days of hard living and golden dreams. Lodgings did not quite supply even the simplest comforts of home. A friend of those days met Barrie in Fleet Street in after years, and asked him if he remembered the landlady with whom they quarrelled because she wore the novelist's socks to church on a Sunday. "We found her out one wet afternoon."

“As the M.A. drew nigh, students on their prospects might have been farmers discussing the weather,” he tells us. And then he draws for us this diverting but essentially truthful picture of the student’s hour of triumph: “Who has thrilled as the student that with bumping heart strolls into Middlemass’s to order his graduate’s gown? He hires it—five shillings—but the photograph to follow makes it as good as his for life. Look at him, young ladies, as he struts to the Synod Hall to have M.A. tacked to his name. Dogs do not dare bark at him. His gait is springy; in Princes Street he is as one who walks up stairs. Gone to me are those student days for ever, but I can still put a photograph before me of a ghost in gown and cap, the hair straggling under the cap as tobacco may straggle over the side of a tin when there is difficulty in squeezing down the lid. How well the little black jacket looks, how vividly the wearer remembers putting it on! He should have worn a dress coat, but he had none. The little jacket resembles one with the tails off, and, as he artfully donned his gown, he backed against the wall so that no one might know.”

When Barrie left the University the only thing clear to him was his determination to take to literature as a profession; but the opportunity was not yet at hand, though, as we shall presently see, it was well on the way. The year before going to Edinburgh he had written a three volume novel, which a kind publisher offered to bring out if the

author paid him £100. Barrie had about sixpence to spare at the time, but the fact which stabbed him was that the publisher innocently referred to him as a "clever lady."

"The malignancy of publishers, however, could not turn me back," he says. "From the day on which I first tasted blood in the garret my mind was made up; there could be no hum-dreadful-drum profession for me; literature was my game. It was not highly thought of by those who wished me well. I remember being asked by two maiden ladies, about the time I left the University, what I was to be, and when I replied brazenly, 'an author,' they flung up their hands, and one exclaimed reproachfully, 'and you an M.A.!'"

EARLY DAYS IN JOURNALISM



EARLY DAYS IN JOURNALISM

THE main distinction of Nottingham journalism lies in the fact that it is associated with the name of Mr J. M. Barrie. But to-day the famous author is only a tradition in this pretty Midland town. His press days take us back to a past era of local journalism, and save for the old files of the *Nottingham Journal* and his own novel, "When a Man's Single," there is little or no evidence of his sojourn in Laceland. There are one or two men still engaged on the Nottingham Press, who were so employed during Mr Barrie's brief connection with the *Journal*, but they never met him, never even heard of him while he was a fellow-labourer in the same field, and only know him by his subsequent fame. This is readily accounted for, as he led a very retired and secluded life, meeting nobody outside his own office and familiarising with few within. Writing on this point to a Nottingham clergyman, who was lecturing on his works nearly four years ago, Mr Barrie says: "I thank you for your letter and wish you had a better subject for your lecture. I don't know of any personal article about myself that is not imaginary and largely erroneous. But there is really nothing to tell that would interest anyone. Yes, I was in Nottingham for a year, and liked it

well, though I was known to scarce anyone. If you ever met an uncouth stranger wandering in the dark round the castle, ten or twelve years ago, his appearance unimpressive, a book in each pocket, and his thoughts three hundred miles due north, it might have been the subject of your lecture."

The newspaper on which Mr Barrie was engaged was discontinued and incorporated with a more successful rival shortly after he went to London; so that his old colleagues have been scattered far and wide. Mr Gilmour, now a successful barrister-at-law, and private secretary to Lord Rosebery, was formerly a reporter on the *Journal*, and he is the only one with whom the old friendship seems to have been maintained. Thus it is that you may ask in vain of any on the local Press for a souvenir of the distinguished author whom Nottingham once entertained unawares.

Mr Barrie had graduated in 1882, and was in Edinburgh for several months waiting, like Micawber, for something to turn up. The something did turn up in the shape of an offer of the post of leader-writer on the *Nottingham Journal*, this resulting from an application which Mr Barrie had made in reply to an advertisement, which his sister, Jane Ann, had discovered in some newspaper. The salary offered was not princely: three guineas a week, in fact. But it was a splendid opportunity for putting his journalistic ability to the test, and in February of 1883 he commenced his brief career as a journalist in Nottingham.

He writes as follows of this important event in his career: "At the moment I was as uplifted as the others, for the chance had come at last, with what we all regarded as a prodigious salary, but I was wanted in the beginning of the week, and it suddenly struck me that the leaders were the one thing I had always skipped. Leaders! How were they written? what were they about? My mother was already sitting triumphant among my socks, and I durst not let her see me quaking. I retired to ponder, and presently she came to me with the daily paper. Which were the leaders? she wanted to know, so evidently I could get no help from her. Had she any more newspapers? I asked, and after rummaging, she produced a few with which her boxes had been lined. Others, very dusty, came from beneath carpets, and lastly a sooty bundle was dragged down the chimney. Surrounded by these I sat down and studied how to become a journalist."

In some respects Nottingham is an ideal town for a literary man; it presents so many interesting phases of life that one who is a student of character cannot fail to profit by a stay in it. Neither a great city nor yet a sleepy town, it is something of both. The bustle of commerce and money-making is seen in its busy streets and its frequent factories; but it retains much of the old-fashioned village or parochial spirit. The city and the village seem to be mixed up in Nottingham, and though the village predominates it is slowly succumbing. The town is really a congeries of large villages which have put their

arms around each other's necks and made the modern Nottingham. The new and the gaudy mingle with the old and the historic, the rude rustic lingers beside the smart "city" man, the factory and the warehouse fight an unequal battle with the orchard and the garden, even to the very heart of the town. Here, in a place of many beauties and not a few blemishes, in a town with some intellectual aspirations, and with tendencies in other directions, there is much food for the mind of the novelist, and it is evident that Nottingham has left its impress on Mr Barrie.

The newspaper to which Mr Barrie had become attached in 1883 was a very old-fashioned specimen of journalism, yet during its long career as an independent publication it was conducted with considerable ability, and would compare not unfavourably with many existing dailies of the same class. Mr Barrie was not editor-in-chief, but he was editor *de facto*. He was allowed to write as much as he liked and whatever he liked, his safety valve being the foreman compositor, whose setting power—that is, the capacity of his men for putting into type the matter produced by the literary staff—seems to have dictated the contents of the paper.

But the young leader-writer, or editor, or whatever we may term him, must have had a prodigious capacity for work, as the columns of the *Journal* in 1883 and 1884 bear witness. In addition to writing his daily editorial contributions, which often panned out to two or three columns, he also contributed

every Monday a special article signed "Hippomenes," and every Thursday the same signature was appended to a column of sparkling notes headed "The Modern Peripatetic." Of these various writings the most interesting to-day are, of course, the special articles, many of which would bear republication. The range of topics to which the young author turned his pen seems to have been without limit; he was equally at home discussing "The Marriage Knot," or "The Midnight Oil," "An Old Morality Play," or "Tom, Dick, and Harry." A distinct interest in the stage is shown, his longest and most amateurish production being cast in dramatic form, "The Complete Playgoer" (see Bibliography). These articles have all a rich literary flavour, and prove their author a man of wide reading. The notes of "The Modern Peripatetic" are of unequal merit. Taken in the bulk they are excellent journalism, and occasionally they rise to the height of literature. Such little reflective passages as this are above the usual newspaper standard:—

"The glue that keeps the world together is self-esteem. It is terrible to think of what might happen did Smith some time take it into his head that it was not worth his while to try to out-do Robinson, or Brown that life would still be worth living though his income was fifty pounds per annum short of Jones's. Self-esteem takes the form of a vehement desire to rise superior to our neighbours, and in all Great Britain there is not in all probability a single

street which does not contain at least one superior family. A superior family is one that esteems itself so very much that it cannot avoid looking down on its surroundings, and it is perfectly happy in the knowledge that its drawing-room is one foot by one and a half larger than any other in the vicinity."

Or this :—

"The candid critic is a gentleman of whom all authors approve when he praises their last volume. 'What I wanted,' they explain, 'is no gush of praise, as from a friend, but simply a calm, just review, slating my work if it deserves slating, commending it if it deserves commendation.' Noble fellows! Then when the critic, who is very young in this case, observes that the work bears distinct traces of genius, is Shakespearian without Shakespeare's coarseness, reminds one of Milton in his best moments, and suggests Tennyson before the Poet Laureate's hand lost its cunning, the author smiles gently to himself, and repeats that what he wanted was an honest criticism, and he thinks he has got it.

"But perhaps the candid critic is not young, or has been eating lobster the night before the book comes in for review, what then? He quotes a poetaster, maybe :

'There is no sacred fire in it,
Nor much of homely sense and shrewd,
Imperfect lines, imperfect rhymes,
False quantities, mistaken chimes,
Yet all the feeling good.'

When this is the kind of criticism offered, the in-

dignant poet, before hanging himself, writes a letter to the editor pointing out that his critic is a scoundrel, who, etc., etc. In short, with ninety-nine out of every hundred authors, 'simple justice' means 'indiscriminate praise.'"

This is characteristic :—

"People with blood in their veins no doubt look upon a reception at Court as a much more serious thing than the rabble, who have to be content with water, but even after that is taken into consideration it does seem a trifle ridiculous that the possibility of royal displeasure should be sufficient to break off a match. For my own part, I am very ready to admit that England has seldom had a better Sovereign than the present one, but as for there being any honour in being received by her at Court, I don't see it. If I saw the whole Royal Family coming up one street I should glide into another, and mean no disrespect to them."

Here is an echo of his college days :—

"I remember being invited, with a batch of other undergraduates, once to assist at a banquet given by a college professor to his private lady students. When I know that I am expected to talk to young ladies, I prepare some half-dozen suitable remarks to fire off at intervals, and I was on the point of commencing number one, which was no doubt of a frivolous nature, to the genius who was placed by my side, when she raised her saucer eyes, and asked me eagerly whether I did not think that Berkeley's Immaterialism was founded on an ontological mis-

conception. I contrived to whisper that such had always been my secret impression, then quietly fainted, and was sent home to be bled."

There is subtle humour in the following :—

"A great deal of nonsense will be talked over the Queen's book for the next nine days. It is said that too many benefits were showered upon John Brown, but that is nonsense. In the new book the Queen tells how she presented her attendant on one occasion with an oxidised silver biscuit-box, which drew tears from his eyes and the exclamation that this was too much. 'God knows it is not,' is Her Majesty's remark, and I cannot see that it was."

This is also a good specimen of Mr Barrie's capacity for delicately exaggerating a story in a semi-Yankee fashion, and yet without the boisterousness of the American humorist. His effects, though striking and laughter-compelling, are always attained with a delicacy of touch which no trans-Atlantic "funny-man" can ever hope to equal :—

"A public-meeting friend of my acquaintance used to attend every meeting in his neighbourhood for the purpose of calling out 'Hear, hear,' 'Question,' 'Order,' and 'No, no,' and always turned to the newspapers of the next day with anxiety to see if his share in the proceedings had been reported. Where they were attended to he carefully preserved copies of the newspapers, and there can be little doubt that this is the most singular case of literary vanity known since the introduction of printing."

One more extract from these early writings of our distinguished author is worth quoting :—

“The scene was a law court in Paris, and an eloquent young advocate was pleading the cause of his client in a way that brought tears to the eyes of many of his hearers. The speech was recited from memory, and the pleader had taken the precaution of distributing printed copies among the reporters, so that his speech should read properly in the morning’s newspapers. ‘And now,’ he exclaimed, ‘I feel myself wholly unworthy to occupy the proud position I hold this day. The onerous nature of the task makes me tremble lest I should not do my unhappy client justice, and I would to God that an abler advocate would take my place.’ Here he faltered, put his handkerchief to his eyes, and seemed overcome with emotion. Unfortunately one of the reporters did not understand, and fearing that the lawyer had forgotten what came next, he hurriedly looked up the place in his copy of the speech to prompt him. ‘But the tears I see now,’ he exclaimed in a loud whisper, ‘in the eyes of my unhappy client, nerve me to the task.’ Of course, the tables were dissolved in laughter, and the eloquent pleader found that untimely interruption had been sufficient to rob him of a reputation.”

In these columns of *obiter dicta*, Mr Barrie occasionally attempted verse, and even endeavoured to give renderings of Horace ; but it would be wrong to say that he wooed the tuneful Muse with any measure of success. Although these early efforts

would make excellent "copy" if reproduced to-day, we shall not seek to disturb their repose in the forgotten files of the old *Journal*.

I cannot agree with Dr Robertson Nicoll that Mr Barrie's hand is not traceable in the "leaders" which he wrote for the *Journal*. One could scarcely fail to recognise it in such a passage as this, which I take from the "first leader" in the *Journal* of 12th January 1884 :—

"There are optimists and pessimists all over this miserable world. The optimists believe that everything is on the road to being better, and take a cheerful view of civilised society. They know that men have made serious mistakes in the past, and will continue to make them to the end of the chapter, but, taking one thing with another, they are firmly convinced that mankind is advancing, and that this wretched world is not a bad place to live in —especially after dinner. The pessimists take the gloomiest view of matters. Everything is awry and out of joint. Property is not diffused as it ought to be, nor is wealth. Providence will persist in ramming round men into square holes and square men into round holes. The rich have it all their own way, the poor are nowhere. [I have always understood they were everywhere !] Society is sitting on a powder magazine which some fine morning will go off with a crash and wreck the work of ages. Nothing is as it ought to be. Men are not fed as they should be, nor housed, nor taught. The earth is an ante-chamber to hell, and the sons of man are whirled

through space at the rate of 60,000 miles an hour, with their God's face averted from them."

Mr Barrie seems to have had two pet subjects for editorial treatment: Mr Chamberlain and Mr Henry George. Russel of the *Scotsman* told a lady once that when he was hard up for a topic he just had another "dirl at Dr Chalmers." Mr Barrie returns again and again to the consideration of various phases of the political protagonist, and he is never tired of denouncing Mr George's Single Tax. They seem to have been as useful to him as Dr Chalmers was to Russel. But, withal, Barrie's editorial work, from his first week onward, shows a remarkable ripeness of judgment and an easy journalistic style—the "we"-ing not being overdone, as is so often the case with young editors—for one who suddenly found himself a leader-writer with only a week's preparation for the work. There is nothing very surprising in this, however, as the production of "leading articles" is one of the most absurdly easy things to a man of common sense. It is more difficult to write a bright paragraph than a leader that would pass muster even in the *Times*; and I am glad to think that Barrie—like many another who has turned out hundreds of editorial columns—seems to have entertained some measure of contempt for the work. "A devout lady," he writes, "to whom some friend had presented one of my books, used to say when asked how she was getting on with it, 'Sal, it's dreary, weary, uphill work, but I've wrastled through with

tougher jobs in my time, and, please God, I'll wrastle through with this one.' It was in this spirit, I fear, though she never told me so, that my mother wrestled for the next year or more with my leaders, and indeed I was always genuinely sorry for the people I saw reading them." He remarks elsewhere that Margaret Ogilvy gratefully gave up reading leaders the day her son ceased to write them. She was a woman of unfailing good sense.

It is well known, of course, that "When a Man's Single" is the result of Mr Barrie's stay in Nottingham. With the merits of the book as a novel I am not dealing, for the moment, and will only say that it strikes me as rather juvenile, the character of Rob Angus quite failing to convince. Its real value lies in the more or less accurate glimpses it affords behind the scenes of literary life; for, though the author's journalistic experience at the time he wrote the book was inconsiderable and very circumscribed, he has the true novelist's genius for typifying, and, if we exclude Rob Angus, the literary characters of the story may be described as studies from life. One might say this is like criticising "Hamlet" with the Prince left out; but I believe that what I state will be endorsed by those who are familiar with literary life behind the scenes. The Silchester of the book is Nottingham, and the *Daily Mirror* is the old *Nottingham Journal*; but beyond the incidents relating to the experiences of Rob Angus on the *Mirror* staff, there is practically no attempt at "local colour." The description of

the *Mirror* headquarters is very much in keeping with the reality.

“The *Mirror*’s offices,” writes the author, “are nearly crushed out of sight in a block of buildings left in the middle of a street for town councils to pull down gradually. This island of houses, against which a sea of humanity beats daily, is cut in two by a narrow passage, off which several doors open. One of these leads up a dirty stair to the editorial and composing rooms of the *Daily Mirror*, and down a dirty stair to its printing-rooms. It is the door at which you may hammer for an hour without anyone’s paying the least attention.”

The block of buildings still remains, and there is no reason to suppose that the Corporation will seek to pull it down any time within the life of the present generation, as it is an exaggeration to say that it stands in the middle of a street, and the ocean bed which carries the “sea of humanity” on either side is wide enough for all practical purposes. “The dirty stair” is still there, though a recent coat of paint has temporarily falsified the adjective, and the narrow passage where Rob Angus lingered so long still cuts the island of houses in two.

The interior of the old office is more interesting, if less imposing than its elevation. All the fittings and appliances used in the production of the *Mirror* have vanished long since, but in Mr Barrie’s pages these have found something like immortality.

“The editor’s room had a carpet, and was chiefly furnished with books sent in for review. It was

more comfortable, but more gloomy-looking than the reporters' room, which had a long desk running along one side of it, and a bunk for holding coals and old newspapers on the other side. The floor was so littered with newspapers, many of them still in their wrappers, that, on his way between his seat and the door, the reporter generally kicked one or more into the bunk. It was in this way, unless an apprentice happened to be otherwise disengaged, that the floor was swept.

"In this room were a reference library and an old coat. The library was within reach of the sub-editor's hand, and contained some fifty books which the literary staff could consult, with the conviction that they would find the page they wanted missing. The coat had hung unbrushed on a nail for many years, and was so thick with dust that John Milton (the junior reporter) could draw pictures on it with his finger. According to legend it was the coat of a distinguished novelist, who had once been a reporter on the *Mirror*, and had left Silchester unostentatiously by his window."

The slight touch of obvious caricature in this description does not interfere with its truth. Anyone who has had experience of journalistic life in the office of a newspaper of the standing of the *Mirror* will immediately recognise the fidelity of the picture. That reporters' room, with the long desk running along one side of it, its old newspapers, and the economical method of sweeping its floor, are all familiar to the scribe who has toiled

on provincial newspapers, and on the London press for that matter. And where is the journalist who has not experienced over and over again the delight of turning to the scanty reference library, to find that the page he requires in one or other of its books has been destroyed, to light a pipe, perhaps, or through a mishap to the junior reporter when he has been trying how many volumes he could balance on his nose? The coat, too: where is there a reporters' room without that coat, and its tradition?

The charm of the *Mirror* staff, who, for the most part, belong to a bygone Bohemian era, is only heightened by the artistic touch of caricature with which the author rivets them in our memory. Chief amongst them stands Penny, the foreman compositor. He was the most important man in the office, not excepting Mr Licquorish, the editor (an entirely fictitious character), and Barrie depicts him as "a lank, loosely-jointed man of forty, who shuffled about the office in slippers, ruled the compositors with a loud voice and a blustering manner, and was believed to be in Mr Licquorish's confidence. His politics were respect for the House of Lords, because it rose early, enabling him to have it set before supper time." Penny is a wonderfully typical character, he might serve for any foreman compositor; and his scenes with Protheroe, the sub-editor, are pictures of events which are happening in hundreds of newspaper offices every day and every night. For your true foreman believes he is autocrat of

the press, and will not alter the time of getting his stereo plates ready for the machines though the heavens should fall. I know of one of the fraternity who actually refused to correct the proof of his editor's leader because it had not been returned in time — and that editor was the proprietor of the paper, a baronet and a member of Parliament to boot !

Penny not only ruled the *Mirror* compositors, he domineered the sub-editor, and, if the truth must be told, Mr Barrie, the nominal editor of the paper, was at the mercy of this picturesque tyrant. There were occasions, however, when Penny's nature underwent a change. "Sometimes about two o'clock in the morning Penny would get sociable, and the sub-editor was always glad to respond. On these occasions they talked with bated breath about the amount of copy that would come in should anything happen to Mr Gladstone ; and the sub-editor, if he was in a despondent mood, predicted it would occur at midnight. Thinking of this had made him a conservative." Mr Gladstone held on with remarkable tenacity to the silver thread of life for many years after the *Journal* had disappeared.

The original of Penny, who, in person, is not to be recognised in the novelist's fancy portrait, is, I believe, still alive ; but he gave up the struggle with editors, sub-editors, and smaller newspaper fry, long ago, and is now spending an age of ease as the proprietor of a neat little hotel in one of the suburbs of Nottingham. He is about the only

one in Nottingham who remembers anything of Barrie, and in the course of a chat with him a year or two ago he told me that in those far-off days Barrie gave him the impression of one who, behind a shyness of manner, had the capacity for winning success. Though others, who might have been expected to appreciate the literary talent of which Barrie gave unmistakable evidence during his connection with the *Journal*, were blind to his qualities, or not sufficiently interested in his work to recognise its promise, the living representative of Penny assured me that he always felt Barrie would make his mark! Depend upon an old comp for nosing out literary talent—especially after it has been discovered. But Penny can claim some slight share in Barrie's early literary labours, as one of the first articles which our novelist managed to "place" in London was the description of a descent of a coal mine in the neighbourhood of Clifton Grove—which Kirk White's muse has rendered famous—and on this expedition Penny (so he told me) acted as guide, philosopher and friend to the young journalist. Penny's devotion to literature, however, had not, when I met him, extended so far as "When a Man's Single," which he confessed he had not read! But he meant to read it some day—when he got time—and he would like to see Barrie again, "before I peg out"; for the snows of many winters were gathering on the old compositor's head.

Billy Kirker, the chief reporter of the *Mirror*,

represents a journalistic type which is not yet extinct. He was a thorough Bohemian, "his ring, it was noticed, generally disappeared about the middle of the month, and his scarf-pin followed it by the twenty-first. With the beginning of the month they reappeared together. The literary staff was paid monthly." And, oh! how many Billy Kirkers I have known; always "talking shop," drawing lurid pictures of the inadequacy of their own staffs as compared with their rivals', in order to show how much more and how much better work they can produce with their limited resources. "Enterprise without outlay is the motto of this office," were among the first words of Billy's greeting to Rob Angus when he had summoned the courage to mount that dirty stair and face his fate inside the *Mirror* office. Here again Barrie is absolutely faithful to fact. These words might well have been substituted for the legend "*Pro Rege, Lege, Grege*," which adorned the editorial page of the old *Journal*. But Billy Kirker had no ill-will to his deadly rival on the opposition paper, as he explained with charming naïveté to Rob. "Oh, no," said Kirker, "we help each other. For instance, if Daddy Walsh, the *Argus* chief, is drunk, I help him, and if I am drunk, he helps me. I am going down to the 'Frying Pan' to see him now."

Before going to the "Frying Pan" he borrowed five shillings from the new recruit from Thrums. The "Frying Pan" is the fictitious name for a small public-house of very uninviting aspect, which

at a recent date still stood near to the *Daily Express* office, but latterly frequented by a class to whom Barrie is a closed book. Time was when a convivial crew, known as the Kettle Club, whose chief delights were spinning yarns and hard drinking, had their headquarters there. Rumour says that Barrie was once induced to visit this home of intellectual refinement; but rumour could have given even the members of the Kettle Club points and a beating. To-day, the so-called "Press House" is a tavern a few yards removed from the "Frying Pan," and there penny-a-liners and half-fledged reporters drink beer and fancy themselves full-blown journalists, carrying down traditions of Billy Kirker and that bright Bohemian band. But there are no Barries among them.

BEGINNINGS IN LITERATURE

BEGINNINGS IN LITERATURE

It is well known that Mr Barrie's start was like that of so many others who have won their way to greatness in the Republic of Letters: a brief spell of Journalism, and then—the plunge into Literature. It is strange that Journalism, the faithful handmaiden of Literature, should be contemned by those rare ones who have managed to find a footing in the literary world without her valuable assistance. And there are even those who, having sneaked into the upper storey by the stairway from the basement, so to say, affect to despise the means by which they mounted.

Barrie, however, is not of these; he frankly and thankfully records his indebtedness to Journalism, which he so happily describes as “that grisette of Literature, who has a smile and a hand for all beginners, welcoming them at the threshold, teaching them so much that is worth knowing, introducing them to the other lady whom they have worshipped from afar, showing them even how to woo her, and then bidding them a bright God-speed—he were an ingrate who, having had her joyous companionship, no longer flings her a kiss as they pass.”

He even goes on to say: “But though she bears no ill-will when she is jilted, you must serve faith-

fully while you are hers, and you must seek her out and make much of her, and, until you can rely on her good-nature (note this), not a word about the other lady. When at last she took me in, I grew so fond of her that I called her by the other's name, and even now I think at times that there was more fun in the little sister."

From this we gather that Barrie considers that a man who determines to become a struggler after literary fame through the gateway of Journalism must win his spurs as a journalist before attempting the greater things beyond. This is a proposition which most journalists will concede. It might also be thought to carry with it another proposition: that the man who is a journalist should, so long as he continues in that occupation, serve *none* other than the "grisettes." In other words, the journalist should be one who does not sigh to see his ephemeral writings reprinted with wide margins and bound in art-linen, but is content each day, each week, to devote his pen to whatever the voice of the flying day may call for.

When Rob Angus, the hero of "When a Man's Single," secures an editorial post on the *Daily Wire*, the editor says, "You suit me very well, Angus. You have no lurking desire to write a book, have you?" "No," Rob answered; "since I joined the Press that ambition seems to have gone from me." So this idea is evidently no new thing in the mind of Mr Barrie. I remember his friend Dr Robertson Nicoll saying that no really busy journalist has tim^e

to produce books which are anything more than reprints of his worthiest journalism.

But there is no rule without its exception, and Barrie himself furnishes a brilliant example of the journalist who was an author, in the best sense of the word, from the very outset, and an able journalist at the same time. I do not believe that he was ever one day, during his period of leader-writing on the *Nottingham Journal*, without a thought of seeing his name on the back of a book. He was using Journalism as the bridge across that brawling, abysmal stream which swirls past the fair realms of Literature, that stream which has drowned so many who have sought to cross without the bridge. Yet he did not scramble over as though the bridge were a structure of which he was afraid, a thing he despised; he strode boldly and confidently, even enjoying the passage, arriving unruffled and in excellent condition for the conflict on the other side.

It was during his quiet days—or nights, rather—of conscientious leader-writing on a provincial daily paper that he was pluming his wings for the flight to London (if I may be permitted one more metaphor). For then he sent forth to appreciative editors in the Mecca of Letters some little sketches which Fate had willed to be the foundations of his fame. It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that it was largely owing to the encouragement of Mr Frederick Greenwood, then editing the *St James's Gazette*, that the young leader-writer set resolutely

to work on that rich vein he had struck in the first "Thrums" sketch which Mr Greenwood accepted and published in his paper. That was entitled "An Auld Licht Community," and appeared in the *St James's* of November 17, 1884.

He sent some articles on other subjects to the same editor, but these were declined. A second Auld Licht sketch was, however, immediately welcomed, and Barrie already began to feel he was making good progress across that aforesaid bridge. Should he come up to London and venture on a journalistic career? he asked Mr Greenwood. Note that he was still far from being done with Journalism. The editor replied that as he did not know whether his contributor could do good work on anything but Auld Lichts he could not advise him to desert his humble desk in the provincial newspaper office. But, like so many who ask for advice and then disregard it, he took the bold step, and early in 1885 he was another unit added to the vast throng of London's men of the pen.

He tells the story himself in this way: "I wrote and asked the editor if I should come to London, and he said no, so I went, laden with charges from my mother to walk in the middle of the street (they jump out on you as you are turning a corner), never to venture forth after sunset, and always to lock up everything (I who could never lock up anything, except my heart in company)."

There is a passage in "When a Man's Single" that has all the appearance of autobiography, and I

cannot but think that Rob Angus's impressions of London are nothing other than the thoughts which Fleet Street awakened in the mind of J. M. Barrie when he fared forth from the North determined to make it, and all that it stands for, listen to him:—

“A certain awe came upon Rob as he went down Fleet Street on the one side, and up it on the other. He could not resist looking into the faces of the persons who passed him, and wondering if they edited the *Times*. The lean man who was in such a hurry that wherever he had to go he would soon be there, might be a man of letters whom Rob knew by heart, but perhaps he was only a broken journalist with his eye on half-a-crown. The mild-looking man whom Rob smiled at because, when he was half-way across the street, he lost his head and was chased out of sight by half-a-dozen hansom cabs, was a war correspondent who had been so long in Africa that the perils of a London crossing unmanned him. The youth who was on his way home with a pork chop in his pocket edited a society journal. Rob did not recognise a distinguished poet in a little stout man who was looking pensively at a barrowful of walnuts, and he was mistaken in thinking that the bearded gentleman who held his head so high must be somebody in particular. Rob observed a pale young man gazing wistfully at him, and wondered if he was a thief or a sub-editor. He was merely an aspirant who had come to London that morning to make his fortune, and he took Rob for a leader-writer at least. The offices, however, and even the

public buildings, the shops, the narrowness of the streets, all disappointed Rob. The houses seemed squeezed together for economy of space, like a closed concertina. Nothing quite fulfilled his expectations but the big letter-holes in the district postal offices. He had not been sufficiently long in London to feel its greatest charm, which has been expressed in many ways by poet, wit, business man, and philosopher, but comes to this, that it is the only city in the world in whose streets you can eat penny buns without people's turning round to look at you."

He had done work for others than Mr Greenwood before coming to London, as he said in later years at a dinner to Mr F. W. Robinson, the talented novelist, who edited the now defunct *Home Chimes*, in which not a few celebrated writers made early appearances, that when he came to London it was to him the place where *Home Chimes* was published. But during those early days in London the *St James's* was his mainstay, Mr Greenwood his patron saint. He wrote hundreds of articles on all sorts of subjects for its pages; "My Lady Nicotine," "Auld Licht Idylls," "A Window in Thrums," were largely reprints—much revised—from these contributions, and there still remain buried in its old files the potential contents of several other books. These, if he cared to resuscitate them, would be most valuable properties to him, and though they would not enhance his reputation I do not think they would in any measure detract therefrom.

As a good specimen of his journalistic humour I should like to quote a few paragraphs from a very diverting sketch entitled "The Strange Case of Sir George Trevelyan and Mr Otto," which appeared in the *St James's Gazette* on July 29, 1887, as a *jeu d'esprit* on the occasion of Sir George Otto Trevelyan's successful contest of the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow, following upon his return to the Gladstonian fold, which he had quitted with Mr Chamberlain and others in 1886. It is seldom that a political contest calls forth such delicate satire.

"Some curious stories," Mr Barrie wrote, "are afloat in Glasgow about Sir George Trevelyan. While he was speaking at a certain temperance institute on Monday an elderly lady, whose position near the platform gave her a good view of him, suddenly flung up her hands and fainted. At the hotel where Sir George is staying it is said that three of the servants have left already—one in convulsions. It is also stated that the Gladstone committee are in a very perturbed state of mind."

A reporter is said to have interviewed the lady who fainted, the three servants, Sir George's valet, and a Mr Otto, and had gathered strange information. Tagg, the boots at the hotel, had seen Mr Otto in the house, but was certain that he never arrived.

"'Sir George and Mr Otto are very like each other?' 'I suppose so; but you can easily distinguish them. Mr Otto is smaller and meaner-looking, and his clothes are too large for him.'

“‘Will you tell me why you left the hotel so hurriedly?’ ‘I was frightened.’

“‘Why?’ ‘I don’t know. Yes, it was Mr Otto who frightened me.’

“‘Tell me how.’ ‘I don’t like to. Sir George had told me to knock him at eight and bring him his letters. One morning I took them as usual. I gave them to him and retired. When I got downstairs I found that I had forgotten one, so I ran back and gave it to him—no, not to him, to Mr Otto.’

“‘Then Mr Otto was in the room? I thought you had never seen them together?’ ‘Mr Otto was in the room, but Sir George had disappeared.’

“‘The last person interviewed was Bolton, Sir George’s valet. On my way downstairs I met Bolton, and mentioned that I had just left Mr Otto. ‘Not in No. 27?’ he cried anxiously. ‘Yes,’ I said. He looked curiously at me, and then explained, in some excitement, that he would not enter the room. Bolton is an intelligent man, and has the reputation of being very reserved. He seemed glad, however, to have someone to talk to.

“‘I won’t stand it any longer,’ he said; ‘I shall leave.’

“‘But Sir George is a good master, is he not?’ ‘He is the best of masters, but as for that Otto——’

“‘When did you see Mr Otto first?’ ‘About six months ago. That was at the time Sir George was unwell.’

“‘What was the matter with him?’ ‘The doctors said it all came of drinking too much water.’

“‘Did Mr Otto visit him at that time?’ ‘Visit him? I thought you knew all about it. How can a man visit himself?’

“‘But Sir George and Mr Otto are not the same persons?’ ‘I don’t know about that. All I can say is that another week of this will drive me mad. But that is Sir George calling; I must go.’

“‘It cannot be Sir George; he is not in the hotel.’ ‘Yes, he is, in No. 27. Did you not see the water on the table?’

“‘Stop a moment. You can tell me, perhaps, what Sir George’s politics are?’ ‘He is a staunch Unionist.’

“‘And Mr Otto?’ ‘He is an out-and-out Gladstonian.’”

The squib caused Sir George some annoyance, as it was quoted by the *Glasgow Herald* the day before the election, and some Glasgow folk didn’t quite see the humour of it. The local *Mail*, it is alleged, seriously stated that “there is not an atom of fact in it.”

One of the earliest friendships which Barrie formed after coming to London was that of Mr Alexander Riach, then one of the “young lions” of the *Daily Telegraph*, a Scotsman who, unlike the majority of his race that come “sooth,” went back to the auld country to edit the *Scotsman’s* offspring, the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*—one of the smartest evening newspapers ever produced. It was soon after their London friendship was formed that Mr Riach went north and he enrolled Barrie amongst

the contributors who were to stamp the *Dispatch* with a distinct individuality from its first issue. For several years, Barrie's pen was in weekly evidence in the pages of the *Dispatch*, his "specials" appearing usually on Wednesdays and Fridays. For the most part his contributions were of topical, and sometimes purely local, interest; but many were of the same type as his work in the *St James's*, worthy of preservation. They were always marked by his shrewd knowledge of humanity and his unfailing humour. A few extracts may be appropriately introduced here.

There is much humour and a considerable degree of truth in these "Rules for Carving":—

Rule I.—*It is not good form to climb on to the table.* There is no doubt a great temptation to this. When you are struggling with a duck, and he wobbles over just as you think you have him, you forget yourself. The common plan is not to leap upon the table all at once. This is the more usual process. The carver begins to carve sitting. By-and-by he is on his feet, and his brow is contracted. His face approaches the fowl, as if he wanted to inquire within about everything except that the duck is reluctant to yield any of its portions. One of his feet climbs on to his chair, then the other. His knees are now resting against the table, and, in his excitement, he, so to speak, flings himself upon the fowl. This brings us to

Rule II.—*Carving should not be made a matter of brute force.* It ought from the outset to be kept in mind

that you and the duck are not pitted against each other in mortal combat. Never wrestle with any dish whatever ; in other words keep your head, and if you find yourself becoming excited, stop and count a hundred. This will calm you, when you can begin again.

Rule III.—It will not assist you to call the fowl names. This rule is most frequently broken by a gentleman carving for his own family circle. If there are other persons present, he generally manages to preserve a comparatively calm exterior, just as the felon on the scaffold does ; but in privacy he breaks out in a storm of invective. If of a sarcastic turn of mind, he says that he has seen many a duck in his day, but never a duck like this. It is double-jointed. It is so tough that it might have come over to England with the Conqueror.

Rule IV.—Don't boast when it is all over. You must not call the attention of the company to the fact that you have succeeded. Don't exclaim exultingly, "I knew I would manage it," or "I never yet knew a duck that I couldn't conquer somehow." Don't exclaim in a loud gratified voice how you did it, nor demonstrate your way of doing it by pointing to the *débris* with the carving knife. Don't even be mock-modest, and tell everybody that carving is the simplest thing in the world. Don't wipe your face repeatedly with your napkin, as if you were in a state of perspiration, nor talk excitedly, as if your success had gone to your head. Don't ask your neighbours what they think of your carving. Your

great object is to convince them that you look upon carving as the merest bagatelle, as something that you do every day and rather enjoy.

The following humorous observations on running after a hat are in the same style as the above and very characteristic of the author :—

Some don't run. They pretend to smile when they see their hat borne along on the breeze, and glance at the laughing faces around in a way implying "Yes it is funny, and I enjoy the joke although the hat is mine." Nobody believes you, but if this does you good you should do it. You don't attempt to catch your hat, as it were, on the wing. You walk after it, smiling, as if you liked the joke the more you think of it, and confident that the hat will come to rest presently. You are not the sort of man to make a fuss over a hat. You won't give the hat the satisfaction of thinking that it can annoy you. Strange though it may seem, there are idiots who will join you in pursuit of the hat. One will hook it with a stick, and almost get it, only not quite. Another will manage to hit it hard with an umbrella. A third will get his foot into it or on it. This does not improve the hat, but it shows that there is a good deal of the milk of human kindness flowing in the street as well as water, and is perhaps pleasant to think of afterwards. Several times you almost have the hat in your possession. It lies motionless just where it has dropped after coming in contact with a hansom. Were you to make a sudden rush at it you could have it, but we have agreed that you are

not that sort of man. You walk forward, stoop, and ——. One reads how the explorer thinks he has shot a buffalo dead, and advances to put his foot proudly on the carcase, how the buffalo then rises, and how the explorer then rises also. I have never seen an explorer running after his hat (though I should like to), but your experience is similar to his with the buffalo. As your hand approaches the hat, the latter turns over like a giant refreshed, and waddles out of your reach. Once more your hand is within an inch of it, when it makes off again. There are ringing cheers from the audience on the pavement, some of them meant for the hat, and the others as an encouragement to you. Before you get your hat you have begun to realise what deer-stalking is, and how important a factor is the wind.

It may be that the following whimsical trifle is not without an element of truth as applied to its author; for Mr Barrie has always been remarkable for his youthful appearance:—

If I were to go back to the place of my boyhood, and find that it had forgotten me, I would probably fling my hat into the air for joy. I have no such luck. Every other summer or so I return to B—— for a few days, and there are very few persons who know that I have ever been away. My greatest trial in B—— is to meet the two Miss F.'s, two old maiden ladies, who do not seem to realise that the years glide on. It was near B—— that I was at school, and the Miss F.'s thought I was still there when I had been for years at Edinburgh University.

Always, when we met in High Street of B——, they asked me how I was getting on at the Grammar School this year, and for a time I explained that I was now in Edinburgh. They expressed surprise at my going there so young, at which I flushed ; and then the next time we met they asked again how I was liking the Grammar School. In time I gave them up, and when they inquired how I was getting on at the Grammar School, I merely said that I was liking it very well. All this has led to complications, for in my last year at Edinburgh the Miss F.'s discovered that I really was at the University, and resented my not telling them that I was going. They have always felt sure that this last year was my first year at the University, and so they puzzle their friends considerably by saying that I took my degree after only being at Edinburgh for a few months. How I did it no one can make out ; but I have been told that at the tea-parties which the Miss F.'s give the affair is frequently discussed, the hostesses going into full details about remembering me quite well as a schoolboy, precisely ten months before I graduated. The general impression, I understand, is that I must be exceedingly clever ; indeed, the local paper had a paragraph about my being the only case on record of a student who had taken his M.A. in one session.

It is interesting to observe how important this connection with the *Edinburgh Dispatch* proved to Barrie, illustrating as it does the oft-forgotten fact that out of things which at the time seem trifling

and unimportant to ourselves, God may be forging one of the most essential links in the chain of our life. Barrie at this time was comparatively unknown, but his work in the *Dispatch* had been designed to bring him into relationship with one who was to become an important factor in his career — Dr Robertson Nicoll. This brilliant journalist had founded the *British Weekly* about six months before, and was casting around for “a man who could write in a lively way on Scottish ecclesiastical affairs,” when, lo! he found in the *Dispatch* one day a burlesque account of the Inverness Assembly of the Free Church. As he himself has told, he lost no time in putting himself into communication with the writer, and on July 18th, 1887, an article entitled “The Rev. Dr Whyte, By an Outsider,” and signed “Gavin Ogilvy” appeared on the front page of the journal. This immediately drew attention to the writer both north and south, and “Gavin Ogilvy” forthwith became a weekly contributor whose productions were eagerly looked forward to by a large circle of intellectual readers.

But at this time the possibilities of Thrums were only seen by Barrie as in a glass darkly, and he had a vague fear that he might soon exhaust his subject—“an’ syne whar wad he be?” we might ask in his well-loved Doric. His mother, to whom he owed his inspiration, and with whom he was now able to live at Kirriemuir six months of the year, was particularly apprehensive on this point. “When I sent off that first sketch,” he confesses,

"I thought I had exhausted the subject, but our editor wrote that he would like something more of the same, so I sent him a marriage, and he took it, and then I tried him with a funeral, and he took it, and really it began to look as if we had him." But, farther on, he tells us that so long as he confined himself to Auld Licht sketches his mother "had a haunting fear that, even though the editor remained blind to his best interests, something would one day go crack within me (as the mainspring of a watch breaks), and my pen refuse to write for ever more. 'Ay, I like the article brawly,' she would say timidly, 'but I'm doubting it's the last.'" It was therefore a great relief to Margaret Ogilvy when she found that her son, far away there in London, was managing to diddle his editor into publishing lots of contributions that hadn't a word of the Scots tongue or a mention of Thrums in them. But brilliant though much of his other work may be, J. M. Barrie without Thrums would have stood no great chance of fame. When he was a boy, an old Thrums tailor—"one of the fullest men I have known, and quite the best talker: he was a bachelor (he told me all that is to be known about woman)"—gave him these lines of Cowley—

"What can I do to be for ever known,
And make the age to come my own?"

He found the answer to this momentous question quite unexpectedly, as indeed all such riddles are solved for us. It had never occurred to him that

his task lay so near his hand; that to turn the lives of his fellow-townsmen into literature was the way that God had chosen for him to make the age to come his own. Nearly eighteen months had elapsed from the commencement of his career as a writer for his daily bread, "before there came to me, as unlooked for as a telegram, the thought that there was anything quaint about my native place."

In the introduction to the fine American edition of his works Mr Barrie gives us the following valuable bit of autobiography, referring to "Auld Licht Idylls": "Many of the chapters," he says, "appeared in a different form in the *St James' Gazette*, and there is little doubt that they would never have appeared anywhere but for the encouragement given to me by the editor of that paper. It was pressure from him that induced me to write a second 'Idyll' and a third after I thought the first completed the picture; he set me thinking seriously of these people, and, though he knew nothing of them himself, may be said to have led me back to them. It seems odd, and yet I am not the first nor the fiftieth who has left Thrums at sunrise to seek the life-work that was all the time awaiting him at home. And we seldom sally forth a second time. I had always meant to be a novelist, but London, I thought, was the quarry.

"For long I had an uneasy feeling that no one save the editor read my contributions, for I was leading a lonely life in London, and not another

editor could I find in the land willing to print the Scotch dialect. The magazines, Scotch and English, would have nothing to say to me—I think I tried them all with ‘The Courting of T’nowhead’s Bell,’ but it never found shelter until it got within book-covers. In time, however, I found another paper, the *British Weekly*, with an editor as bold as my first (or shall we say he suffered from the same infirmity?). He revived my drooping hopes, and I was again able to turn to the only kind of literary work I now seemed to have much interest in. He let me sign my articles, which was a big step for me, and led to my having requests for work from elsewhere, but always the invitations said ‘not Scotch—the public will not read dialect.’ By this time I had put together from these two sources and from my drawerful of rejected stories this book of ‘Auld Licht Idylls,’ and in its collected form it again went the rounds. I offered it to certain firms as a gift, but they would not have it even at that. And then, on a day came actually an offer for it from Messrs Hodder and Stoughton. For this, and for many another kindness, I had the editor of the *British Weekly* to thank.”

There is much in the above that should be encouraging to the beginner in letters, who only knows as yet of the struggle, and to whom success may seem a long way off.

The reading public has many prejudices, but it is always willing to be conquered, and when the “masterful man” comes along in the shape of a

master-author the conquest is sure to follow soon or later. In Barrie's case it was comparatively a short struggle, and two or three years after the time when he found that Scots dialect was enough to damn a book, he had succeeded in making it an attraction; presently its charms became the most striking feature of contemporary letters, and what we may call the Barrie school arose, to accomplish feats unique in the literary history of the nineteenth century.

HIS FIRST BOOK

HIS FIRST BOOK

MR BARRIE, more than any other Scottish writer, has assisted in removing Sydney Smith's absurd stigma about the necessity of a surgical operation to the introduction of a joke into the head of a Scotsman—I suppose Smith wrote "Scotchman," a solecism of which even Barrie is frequently guilty. For Mr Barrie is not only humorous, which the Scots as a people are, but he is also witty, which the Scots as a people are not. There is a very subtle distinction between wit and humour; yet it is easy of illustration. Sydney Smith was witty, so too was Sheridan; Dickens was a humorist; Hood, like Barrie, was at once a wit and a humorist; even Carlyle was a humorist. The difference lies here: wit concerns more the outwardness of things, humour lies deeper. The dictionary definitions of the two qualities are very happy. Thus, wit is described as "the association of ideas in a manner natural but unusual and striking, so as to produce surprise joined with pleasure," while humour is defined in these words: "a deep, kindly, playful sympathy of feeling and fancy, with all kinds of, especially lowly, and even outcast, things." If we accept these definitions as correct, and they so appeal to me—though I do not know how they

would strike the author of that ponderous work, "A Theory of Wit and Humour"—then it may be said that while the Scots are humorous the English are witty; and the Scots have the worthier quality. It was this very fact which led to Sydney Smith's mental confusion; being a mere wit he could not appreciate true humour. There is more "heart" in humour and more "head" in wit. So it results that while you may admire the wit and laugh with him at his merry thoughts, you never grow to love him as you do the humorist. Who that has read "A Window in Thrums" or "Auld Licht Idylls" could fail to love the gentle, true-hearted man that wrote these peerless studies in the humours of lowly life? Yet, as I have indicated, Barrie has written other books which are of a totally different class, and while being eminently amusing are only witty. These are "Better Dead" and "My Lady Nicotine." He might have produced a dozen such works, and we should have welcomed them gladly, but we should only have voted their author a brilliant wit, "a man with a style," we should never have learned to love his books as we love "A Window" and the "Idylls."

"Better Dead" we must regard as Barrie's first book; for although "An Edinburgh Eleven" was written about the same time, and parts of "My Lady Nicotine" even earlier, the former was merely a collection of character studies, bearing the author's *nom de plume*, "Gavin Ogilvy," and the latter was mainly published in order to assert the author's

right to a series of newspaper articles the credit of which had been claimed by more than one unprincipled scribbler. It was in the winter of 1887 that "Better Dead" went trembling into the critics' den in the shape of a little shilling book with a coloured cover very suggestive of a "shilling shocker," the device containing a sanguinary sword, a revolver, and an anarchical creature with a dagger in his hand, the silhouettes of Sir William Harcourt and Lord Randolph Churchill being the only inkling of the diverting nature of the pages within. It was the first book that carried on its cover the words, "by J. M. Barrie," which in 1887 meant so little and a few years later signified so much.

I have ceased to be surprised when people tell me they have never read this book of Barrie's; indeed, it is not astonishing to hear a well-read man declare he has never heard of it. Why this should be I am at a loss to understand, since it is well worth reading and is a little effort of which the distinguished author has no reason to be ashamed. After all, Mr Barrie was not such a juvenile when it appeared. He was then twenty-seven years old, and in these days of early success that is not remarkably young. There are few to-day who will subscribe to the dictum that a man cannot write well until he is forty years of age. Barrie is only now in his fortieth year; his two finest books were published twelve and eleven years ago, and I make bold to say he will never do better work than "A Window in

Thrums" or "Auld Licht Idylls" though he have an innings of a century. I can only attribute the comparative neglect of his first book to the fact that its vein is wit and not humour ; it lacks heart, and in the long run 'tis heart that tells.

If I were asked to set down in a sentence my opinion of "Better Dead" I should say: "It is one of the best sustained pieces of fooling I have read." True, it is only a tiny book—it does not contain more than twenty-four thousand words—but the subject is so delicate, the root idea so difficult of treatment, that I am persuaded few writers of this age could have expended so many words on it without unpleasantness. To make assassination the subject of a *jeu d'esprit* and to write about it to the extent of ten chapters with never a suspicion of offence is to carry through triumphantly a somewhat risky undertaking. This is precisely what Mr Barrie has done in "Better Dead," and this is why I do not hesitate to write of it in those terms of praise.

Although not appearing until the winter of 1887, the germ of "Better Dead" had been born more than two years earlier, as it is to be found in a paper published in the *St James's Gazette* for April 21st, 1885, wherein is suggested the formation of a society for getting rid of people who would be better out of the way, Mr Mallock being proposed as a good beginning, though in the book his name is only mentioned casually, and he receives no place of prominence.

The story introduces us without parley to Andrew Riach (a name probably suggested by that of the editor of the *Edinburgh Dispatch*, who, as we have seen, was one of Mr Barrie's early friends in the world of journalism), a young Scotsman who has "come to town" intending to become private secretary to a member of the Cabinet, and "if time permitted, he proposed writing for the Press." Then forthwith we are whisked away to "Thrums," but here we find the now famous village endowed with the less happy name of "Wheens." Andrew is at the manse with the Rev. Mr Eassie and his daughter Clarrie, who is in love with Andrew, though he, since his return from Aberdeen University with M.A. at the end of his name, has become a slave to logic, and makes a strange wooer. Andrew possesses in fullest measure that dominant characteristic of the Scots people, the bump of argument, abnormally developed by his study of logic. He is arguing the love question with Mr Eassie, cleaning his pipe the while with a hairpin "that his quick eye had detected on the carpet"—a favourite fancy of the author. Andrew reasons love to be folly, and for the moment seems to have routed Mr Eassie, as the author turns again to describe his hero.

Andrew had a very long neck, a fact which is of importance in the story. His face was "as inexpressive as book-covers"—one of those happy similes which abound in all Barrie's writings. "A native of Wheens and an orphan, he had been

brought up by his uncle, who was a weaver, and read Herodotus in the original. The uncle starved himself to buy books and talk about them, until one day he got a good meal, and died of it. Then Andrew apprenticed himself to a tailor." When his time was out he walked to Aberdeen and got a bursary. He was nearly rusticated for praying at a debating society for a divinity professor who was in the chair. "'O Lord!' he fervently cried, 'open his eyes, guide his tottering footsteps, and lead him from the paths of folly into those that are lovely and of good report, for lo! his days are numbered, and the sickle has been sharpened, and the corn is not yet ripe for the cutting.'" All of which is gross exaggeration, of course, but the germ of truth to be found in it suggests a very characteristic Scot of the "dour," argumentative kind.

Mr Eassie had at Andrew again in a different way, hinting that if he didn't become engaged to Clarrie before leaving for London he might find her the banker's wife when he came back. "The banker was unmarried, and had once in February and again in June seen Clarrie home from the Dorcas Society. The town talked about it." So Andrew lingered with Clarrie at the gate that night. "The only objectionable thing about Clarrie was her long hair. She wore a black frock, and looked very breakable. Nothing irritates a man so much. Andrew gathered her passionately in his arms, while a pained puzzled expression struggled to reach his face. Then he replaced her roughly on the ground and left her.

It was impossible to say whether they were engaged."

Andrew took lodgings at the top of a house in Bernard Street, Bloomsbury. He immediately set about the task of finding a Cabinet Minister in need of a secretary, and was disappointed everywhere, although he latterly "offered to take a pound a week less than any other secretary in London." He had fifty-eight testimonials with him, but couldn't get anybody to read them; so he spent a great part of his time reading them over to himself. "He had a yearning to stop strangers in the streets and try a testimonial's effect on them." With the Press, it was no better. "One of the finest things that was ever written on the 'Ontology of Being'" he couldn't induce any editor to publish, by fair means or foul. Eventually he supplied the dailies with mendacious "anecdotes" of great people who were dying, but "as often as not the invalid got better, and then Andrew went without a dinner." This is a habit of great ones for which all journalists will vouch; those whose obituaries are pigeon-holed generally live so long that the notices have to be largely re-written at the end. Those for whom the editor has not prepared always die suddenly.

But Andrew's ingenuity found other means of raising the wind:—

"Once he offered his services to a Conservative statesman; at another time he shot himself in the coat in Northumberland Street, Strand, to oblige an evening paper (five shillings).

“He fainted in the pit of a theatre to the bribe of an emotional tragedian (a guinea).

“He assaulted a young lady and her aunt with a view to robbery, in a quiet thoroughfare, by arrangement with a young gentleman, who rescued them and made him run (ten shillings).

“It got into the papers that he had fled from a wax policeman at Tussaud’s (half-a-crown).”

Riach was now fairly in the blues, and his non-success embittered him against everybody, but Queen Logic still held court at the back of his brain. “Even in his worst days his reasoning powers never left him. Once a mother let her child slip from her arms to the pavement. She gave a shriek. ‘My good woman,’ said Andrew testily, ‘what difference can one infant in the world more or less make?’” While prowling about the streets in this condition of despair there was a man whom he encountered frequently, and who began to exercise a nameless fascination on him. Rounding the upper end of Chancery Lane one evening he ran into him. “Andrew had been dreaming, and the jerk woke him to the roar of London. It was as if he had taken his fingers from his ears”—another of Barrie’s striking similes. The stranger was evidently hurrying somewhere, and Andrew involuntarily hurried after him. In Arundel Street he discovered that the stranger was also shadowing some one. Along the deserted Embankment went the trio, each at some distance from the other. The first leant over the Embankment and gazed

on the flood beneath, "the next moment the stranger had darted forward, slipped his arms round the little man's legs, and toppled him into the river." Andrew bounded forward, but the stranger exercised a mesmeric spell over him. "'He was a good man,' he said, more to himself than to Andrew, 'and the world has lost a great philanthropist; but he is better as he is.'" Thus Andrew became acquainted with the President of the Society for Doing Without Some People.

Andrew told him his story, they had many ideas in common, the president was most considerate; "only once an ugly look came into his eyes. That was when Andrew had reached the middle of his second testimonial." He was willing to assist Andrew to become a probationer of the society, whose noble aim was to punctuate with a full stop the lives of famous people who had reached the goal of their legitimate ambitions, lest they might live to recede from their greatness. Some of the most distinguished men of the time were associated with the organisation, and the far-seeing ones got themselves elected honorary members, as these were free from the attentions of the society, only ordinary members being eligible for "removal." Gladstone in "a very kind letter" to the president hoped that Salisbury would not be admitted an honorary member. It was a dangerous thing to admit one so young as Andrew to the society even as a probationer. The president mentioned the case of an ex-

cellent young man, "discreet beyond his years," who came to them for a time. "It went to his head. He took a bedroom in Pall Mall, and sat at the window with an electric rifle picking them off on the doorsteps of the clubs. It was a noble idea, but of course it imperilled the very existence of the society. He was a curate."

But Andrew is duly admitted a probationer, thanks to the good offices of the president. He attends a meeting of the committee at its house in Bloomsbury. The description of the locality is in Barrie's most characteristic vein. "The London cabman's occupation consists in dodging thoroughfares under repair. Numbers of dingy streets have been flung about to help him. There is one of these in Bloomsbury, which was originally discovered by a student while looking for the British Museum. It runs a hundred yards in a straight line, then stops, like a stranger who has lost his way, and hurries by another route out of the neighbourhood."

The long-neck aforesaid is now a trial to Andrew, as the members of the committee can't keep their eyes off it, and even the president insists on his muffling it up. Mrs Fawcett came and lectured to the society, and protested against their debarring women from its benefits. "You call yourselves a society for suppressing excrescences. Your president tells me," she said, "you are at present inquiring for the address of the man who signs himself 'Paterfamilias' in the *Times*; but the letters

from 'A British Matron' are of no account." She also reminded them of a recent paper by Mrs Kendal on the moral aspect of the drama in the country and went on: "I do not know how the paper affected you. But since reading it I have asked in despair, how can this gifted lady continue to pick her way between the snares with which the stage is beset?" Mrs Lynn Linton she likewise commended to the attention of the S.D.W.S.P.

Andrew's first subject was Mr Labouchere, and the chapter in which his first interview with the Editor of *Truth* is recorded is one of the funniest in the book. Andrew "argued" with him one Sunday, but used in vain the logic he had learned at Aberdeen. He pointed out that Mr Labouchere was at the pinnacle of his fame, and now was the time to avail himself of the good offices of the Society. "Think of the newspaper placards next morning!" he urged, "some of them perhaps edged with black; the leaders in every London paper and in all the prominent provincial ones; the six columns obituary in the *Times*; the paragraphs in the *World*; the motion by Mr Gladstone or Mr Healy for the adjournment of the House; the magazine articles; the promised memoirs; the publication of posthumous papers; the resolution in the Northampton Town Council; the statue in Hyde Park. With such a recompense where would be the sacrifice?" But Mr Labouchere refused; he ordered Andrew to leave his house. "Think of

the public funeral!" cried Andrew in despair. Andrew was shown to the door by the footman, but as he was leaving he put his head in at the doorway again: "Would you mind telling me," he said, "whether you see anything peculiar about my neck?" "It seems a good neck to twist," Mr Labouchere answered a little savagely.

His attempt to assassinate Lord Randolph Churchill was no more successful. It was to be his great effort, as he had failed with Sir George Otto Trevelyan and several other celebrities. He shadowed Lord Randolph for days, and finally decided to do the deed between the Grand Hotel and the House. His lordship left the hotel and wandered through the small thoroughfares lying between Upper Regent Street and Tottenham Court Road, stopping curiously to make notes at every tobacconist's window. After an hour of this he hailed a cab, and as he stepped into it Andrew rushed forward and snatched the notepaper from his hand. He wanted to read it before he slaughtered his victim. This is what he read when he found himself safe from pursuit up a back alley:—

"Great Titchfield Street — Branscombe, 15; Churchill, 11; Langtry, 8; Gladstone, 4.'

"Mortimer Street—Langtry, 11; Branscombe, 9; Gladstone, 6; Mary Anderson, 6; Churchill, 3.'

"Margaret Street—Churchill, 7; Anderson, 6; Branscombe, 5; Gladstone, 4; Chamberlain, 4.'

"Smaller streets—Churchill, 14; Branscombe, 13; Gladstone, 9; Langtry, 9. Totals for to-day:

Churchill, 35 ; Langtry, 28 ; Gladstone, 23 ; Branscombe, 42 ; Anderson, 12 ; Chamberlain, nowhere.' Then followed, as if in a burst of passion, 'Branscombe still leading—confound her.'"

Andrew saw that Lord Randolph had been calculating fame from vesta boxes ! In the end he only managed to get a cut at his lordship's heels as he entered his hotel after the adjournment of the House.

At the next meeting of the S.D.W.S.P., Riach was a candidate for admission to full membership, and read his thesis, in the course of which he said, "What shall we do, Society asks, with our boys ? I reply, Kill off the parents. There can be little doubt that forty-five years is long enough for a man to live. Parents must see that. Youth is the time to have your fling." But Andrew had to flee from the committee, his neck had told against him, and while he was waiting election in a side-room they were drawing lots for him. The president came to his aid, hustled him away in a cab to King's Cross, and took a ticket for him to Glasgow. It was Andrew's only chance the president assured him, his own fingers itching. The committee were only human, he exclaimed. "Your neck," he cried, "cover it up !" And Andrew only understood when the president's fingers met round his throat, and "he murmured in a delirious ecstasy, 'what a neck, what a neck !' Just then his foot slipped. He fell. Andrew jumped up and kicked him as hard as he could three times. . . . Andrew never thought

so much of the president again. You cannot respect a man and kick him."

In the end, of course, Andrew Riach went back to Wheens, where the master of the Grammar School having conveniently died, Andrew got the post and married Clarrie: "He was humbler now than he had been, and in our disappointments we turn to woman for solace." "Domesticated and repentant, he has renounced the devil and all her works. . . . For Andrew has told Clarrie all the indiscretions of his life in London, and she has forgiven everything. Ah, what will not a wife forgive!"

Here then is a brief outline of this most diverting trifle; from which it will be seen that the root idea is as whimsical as any ever conceived by Mr W. S. Gilbert, while the manner in which it is worked out is characteristic of no one but Barrie himself, the fun being sustained without effort from first to last, and every page scintillating with wit.

Yet we find its author, in his preface to the volume of the American edition of his works in which it appears, almost on the point of disowning it; "weighted with 'An Edinburgh Eleven,' it would rest very comfortably in the mill-dam," says he. But, after all, there is a little corner in his heart for it, as he goes on to say: "This juvenile effort is a field of prickles, into which none may be advised to penetrate. I made the attempt lately in cold blood, and came back shuddering. . . . And yet I have a sentimental interest in 'Better Dead,' for it was my first, published when I had small hope of getting anyone

to accept the Scotch ; and there was a week when I loved to carry it in my pocket, and did not think it a dead weight. Once I almost saw it find a purchaser. She was a pretty girl, and it lay on a bookstall, and she read some pages and smiled, and then retired, and came back and began another chapter. Several times she did this, and I stood in the background trembling with hope and fear. At last she went away without the book, but I am still of opinion that, had it been just a little bit better, she would have bought it."

SOME LITERARY
CHARACTERISTICS

SOME LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS

"MR BARRIE is a man with a style," said the *Saturday Review* in noticing "When a Man's Single." "Barrie is without any pretention to 'style,'" said a sapient critic in a literary journal recently. Thus may men differ ; and, after all, what is called literary "criticism" is largely a question of personal liking or loathing. A man starts by liking a book, and then he tries to tell you why you should like it also ; another hates it, and struggles to furnish forth reasons for doing so. True, there be critics who valiantly endeavour to like what they admire and know to be good craftsmanship, rather than admire what they like ; but they only muster a small minority in the Republic of Letters. Of course two men may, in all sincerity, arrive at quite different estimates of another's work ; yet, if criticism is to have any value whatever, it ought to be possible to avoid such a clash of opinion as I have just recorded. For my own part, immediately I found a man saying Barrie had no style I wrote that man down an ass and promptly forgot him, and even the paper in which he wrote, though I recall the fact that at the time I was surprised to find such nonsense in an important organ of literary opinion.

What is "style" ? This is a question that has

been asked much oftener than it has been answered, and it is not for me to venture any formal reply. But I would advance the opinion—indeed, it is a fixed canon of belief with me—that style is simply individuality. It is that which distinguishes the artist from the talented craftsman. It is the actor's "personality" that lifts his performance from the ruck of clever impersonations to the higher plane of creative art; the painter's "method" is the same thing, and literary "style" is the author's personality. "The style is the man," says Buffon. Thus, what gives distinction to all great artists is something that is above art and comes direct from nature. Mr Rudyard Kipling is credited with saying at a gathering of literary men that such power as he possessed "came from the outside." That is where "style" comes from. Though by "playing the sedulous ape" to great authors, as R. L. Stevenson confessed he had done, one may evolve a certain grace of manner in composition, it is only by giving judicious freedom to one's own individuality that a characteristic style may be established. Although Stevenson's manner was chiselled and polished to a risky degree, his style was essentially his own, and in the works where he had a collaborateur the passages from his pen may be as easily distinguished as though they bore his signature.

Well, if style be individuality, there is no contemporary author more of a stylist than J. M. Barrie. Nearly everything he has written contains evidence of his hand; even when he was using the editorial

“we” he could not hide his personality, and naturally so, since that is the indestructible part of man. We have all seen a dozen different actors playing Hamlet. They have all spoken Shakespeare’s words, and probably half a dozen of them have been “great,” yet no two of that half-dozen have been alike: the assertive personality of each has shone through the spoken words. So is it with the author; he whose individuality is weak is inevitably a writer whose work lacks character, without which distinction is impossible. Barrie has shown himself a writer of remarkable individuality, and that is to say, the *Saturday Reviewer* who hailed him as “a man with a style” spoke truly.

The chief features of Barrie’s style are a quaintness of expression, a simple directness of narrative, and an unfailing sense of humour—often as though the author were chuckling to himself as he wrote. His gift for descriptive writing—probably the best test of “style”—is very marked, though he makes little of it. Indeed he tells us that we shall find very little descriptive writing in his books, because his mother did not like it, and he wrote to please her. I don’t think this is altogether a compliment to Margaret Ogilvy’s literary discrimination. Here and there in his books we see in a flash what wonderful pen pictures he might have drawn for us if he had occasionally chosen a landscape rather than a character study; his feeling for nature is so keenly correct. Take, for example, the opening chapter of “Auld Licht Idylls,” in which winter in Glen

Quharity is so beautifully described. Note this little passage : "Through the still air comes from a distance a vibration as of a tuning fork : a robin, perhaps, alighting on the wire of a broken fence." Of all the sights and sounds of a winter day, could one more typical, more eloquently suggestive, have been selected ? Again, in a description of Thrums : "This night the snow must have fallen as if the heavens had opened up, determined to shake themselves free of it for ever." This latter is peculiarly characteristic of Barrie : his fondness for impressing a scene on the memory by means of a little exaggeration. Sometimes, in sooth, he is tempted to step beyond the lines of legitimate exaggeration, and his lusty sense of humour inclines to outrun his discretion occasionally. Now and again, in "The Little Minister," in "Sentimental Tommy," and in the sequel to the latter, we see him fighting this temptation. Thus when he pushes the difficulties which Gavin had in disposing of the Egyptian's cloak to the point of introducing a dog to scrape it out of the hole in the garden where the Little Minister had buried it, we cannot but feel that here exaggeration has gone beyond bounds. It seems to me, too, that Tommy's prayer at the supper of the S.R.J.C. touches absurdity, and leaves one with the feeling that the oddity of Tommy's nature has for a moment been so greatly stretched that we find ourselves saying, "This is just a bit too much." Again, when Mr M'Lean is introduced amongst "the Jacobites" in the Den,

and actually takes part with Tommy, Corp, and the rest in their juvenile drama of "Stroke," we protest that Barrie has given his whimsical fancy too free a head: it is carrying the joke too far. This propensity is still obvious in "Tommy and Grizel," where Corp's behaviour after Gavinia had accepted him is represented as reaching a point of ludicrousness which challenges belief. He was going round the countryside telling all his friends and acquaintances the great news, when, "Six miles from home he saw a mudhouse on the top of a hill and ascended genially. He found at their porridge, a very old lady with a nut-cracker face, and a small boy. We shall see them again. 'Auld wifie,' said Corp, 'I dinna ken you, but I've just stepped up to tell you that Gavinia is to hae me.'" We do see them again, and useful they prove to the working of the story, but we should have preferred to make their acquaintance elsewhere than at the expense of Corp Shiach's sanity. The ankle episode in the early chapters of "Tommy and Grizel" also taxes one's credulity severely.

It would naturally be said that his gift for character is far greater than for descriptive—did we not know that he has chosen to keep the latter in reserve. Still, if he had never written any other descriptive passages than those in "The Little Minister," which tell of that terrible night and day in the Glen, and through which the mighty rush of waters and wailing of the winds are heard with eerie reality, he would have been marked as

a descriptive writer of rare power. But character portraiture is unquestionably the back-bone of all his books; and his capacity for this is superlative. How quickly he touches the essentials that typify; a few words, a line or two at most, perhaps just a sentence telling of a quaint action, and a character stands revealed before us. It is a great gift this. When he tells us in "When a Man's Single" that Mr Meredith dated his advances in prosperity by his chairs—first they were horse-hair, then plush, and latterly leather—we know the man at once. Or take "Cree Queery," who, a day or two before he died, paid a debt he had owed for nearly twelve years—a debt for which he had never been asked, but which through all his poverty had weighed on his simple mind, so that in sixpences and coppers, which he had slowly saved, together with a half-sovereign he had been given, he managed at the eleventh hour to discharge his obligation, and left this world clear of debt. We know all his life in the knowledge of this alone. Exaggeration is a frequent habit with Barrie even in character sketching, but it seldom exceeds the limit to which it may safely be used as an effectual, and withal artistic, method of fixing a character in the reader's mind. One typical illustration will suffice. Take this of the Auld Licht minister from the "Idylls":—

"Mr Dishart in the pulpit was the reward of his upbringing. At ten he had entered the university. Before he was in his teens he was practising the art

of gesticulation in his father's gallery pew. From distant congregations people came to marvel at him. He was never more than comparatively young. So long as the pulpit trappings of the kirk at Thrums lasted he could be seen, once he was fairly under weigh with his sermon, but dimly in a cloud of dust. He introduced headaches. In a grand transport of enthusiasm he once flung his arms over the pulpit and caught Lang Tammis on the forehead. Leaning forward, with his chest on the cushions, he would pommel the Evil One with both hands, and then, whirling round to the left, shake his fist at Bell Whamond's neckerchief. With a sudden jump he would fix Pete Todd's youngest boy catching flies at the laft window. Stiffening unexpectedly, he would leap three times in the air, and then gather himself in a corner for a fearsome spring. When he wept he seemed to be laughing, and he laughed in a paroxysm of tears. He tried to tear the devil out of the pulpit rails. When he was not a teetotum he was a windmill. His pump position was the most appalling. Then he glared motionless at his admiring listeners, as if he had fallen into a trance with his arm upraised. The hurricane broke next moment. Nanny Sutie bore up under the shadow of the wind-mill, which would have been heavier if Auld Licht ministers had worn gowns, but the pump affected her to tears. She was stone-deaf."

All this, of course, is very obvious exaggeration; but does it not leave us with a very real grip of

Mr Dishart's pulpit manner? And that is its justification.

There is scarcely a character in all Barrie's books that we are likely to forget; even those who only "cry in, in the bye-gaein," so to say. This is due to the novelist's extraordinary power of portraiture. He has only one failure that I can think of, and that is Lord Rintoul in "The Little Minister." Here for once the portrait is somewhat nebulous, and probably this should be set down to the fact that the novelist is less at home in the "big house" than in the but-and-ben—less in sympathy at all events. As against Rintoul, take the inhabitants of the London building in which Jean Miles lived with her children. Shovel, his mother, who smelt of gin, his father, "who followed many professions, among them that of finding lost dogs," and the other dwellers in that mean house are all vividly portrayed in a few rapid strokes, so that we know them far better than we ever get to know Rintoul; but "Sentimental Tommy" is, indeed, among all the author's works, the one in which every character stands out clear and unmistakable.

Scots character is that which Barrie knows best of all, though his genius for character study is by no means purely local, as he has shown us in "My Lady Nicotine," "When A Man's Single," "Sentimental Tommy," and "Tommy and Grizel." But the Scot he knows as only a "brither Scot" can know him; and, on the whole, he is very just in his interpretation of the Scots character. That strange cosmopolitan Scot, Mr R. B. Cunninghame

(be careful of that "e," Mr Printer) Graham, has recently been writing in his usual clever but abominably cynical style about the "Kail-yarders." "If it pleases them," says he, "to represent that half of the population of their native land is imbecile, the fault is theirs. But for the idiots, the precentors, elders of churches, the 'select men,' and those landward folk who have been dragged of late into publicity, I compassionate them, knowing their language has been distorted, and they themselves been rendered such abject snivellers, that not a henwife, shepherd, ploughman, or anyone who thinks in 'guid braid Scots,' would recognise himself dressed in the motley which it has been the pride of kailyard writers to bestow. Neither would I have Englishmen believe that the entire Scotch nation is composed of ministers, elders, and maudlin whiskified physicians, nor even of precentors who, as we know, are employed in Scotland to put the congregation out by starting hymns on the wrong note, or in a key impossible for any but themselves to compass."

No criticism could be more grossly unfair than this. The most ignorant English ridicule that has been poured forth on the Barrie school of writers has not been more unjust. None of our contemporary Scots writers claim to depict national character; they have dealt with essentially local types, and herein lies their strength. The "Thrums" folk are different in many ways from those of "Drumtochty," just as they do not always pair with the inhabitants of "Glenbruar," "the Folk Carglen,"

or yet the "Meggotsbrae" bodies, though in them all certain national traits are clearly to be seen. The whisky bottle figures far less in kailyard books—there is scarce a whiff of it in Barrie—than it does in the alleged humour of England; and if the minister, the precentor, the beadle, and the "eedit" are much in evidence, it is because in village life they fill most picturesque parts. Moreover, if one will only read the anecdotes of village "loonies" with which Scots literature abounds—especially Dean Ramsay's "Reminiscences" and "The Laird o' Logan"—he will find that the average Scots idiot was a creature of considerably more humour than the average Englishman, than the average Scot for that matter. There are dull, uninteresting folk in Thrums—lots of them—but Barrie's business was to leave them alone and deal with those of real literary value. This he has done with infinite good taste and with all justice. He is no more blind to the faults of the average Scot than he is alive to his many excellent qualities. Only once have I felt inclined to wince in reading anything of Barrie's and that was the chapter entitled "Making the best of it" in "A Window in Thrums"; for here it seemed to me he was dwelling on an unworthy element of character, which is more typical of the English rural and working classes than of the Scots. I mean the flattering of wealthy fools with a view to largess. The whining beggar and the sneak are less common in the north than in the south; but they are to be found for all that, and although

"Making the Best of It" leaves a bad taste in the mouth, I cannot pretend that it is false to life; yet I do say that the spirit of it is more frequently to be met with in England than in Scotland.

That said, it seems to me Barrie's countrymen owe him nothing but gratitude for the genuine sympathy with which he has portrayed some of their finest national traits. He has revealed the Scot in no unpleasant light, and though it be true that for the most part his characters belong to a generation that has passed away, only their outward form has disappeared, their qualities are abiding and still remain even if garbed in different guise. "That we are all being reduced to one dead level, that 'character' abounds no more and life itself is less interesting, such things I have read, but I do not believe them," he says. "I have seen them given as my reason for writing of a past time, and in that at least there is no truth. In our little town, which is a sample of many, life is as interesting, as joyous as ever it was; no group of weavers was better to look at or think about than the rivulet of winsome girls that overruns our streets every time the sluice is raised. The comedy of summer evenings and winter firesides is played with the old zest, and every window-blind is the curtain of a romance."

Elsewhere I deal at some length with his use of the Doric, and here it is not necessary to do more than remark that Barrie has never been guilty of "distorting" the Scots tongue, unless it be wrong of him to

use it with such discrimination that his passages in dialect may be understood of the Sassenach.

Humour, of course, is one of Barrie's strongest literary qualities; and if the more educated Scot may charge him with depicting folk in whom humour is conspicuous by its absence, who shall say that even here he does his townsfolk an injustice? People of the standing of Tammas Haggart and Snecky Hobart in an English town as parochial as Thrums would not be chosen as types of English wits, nor would they compare very favourably with the old-fashioned folk of Thrums in intellectual capacity or range of knowledge. Tammas was really a ponderous blether. He is made to say: "A humorist would often no ken 'at he was ane if it was na by the wy he maks other fowk lauch. A body canna be expeckit baith to mak' the joke an' to see't. Na, that would be doin' twa fowks' wark."

"Weel, that's reasonable enough, but I've often seen ye lauchin'," said Henry, "lang afore other fowk lauched."

"Nae doubt," Tammas explained, "an' that's because humour has twa sides, juist like a penny piece. When I say a humorous thing mysel' I'm dependent on other fowk to tak note o' the humour o't, bein' mysel' ta'en up wi' the makin' o't. Aye, but there's things I see an' hear 'at maks me lauch, an' that's the other side o' humour."

From which one might fairly conclude that Tammas "joked wi' deeficulty," but I am sure nobody would more quickly repudiate such a charge being

levelled at the Scottish people than Mr Barrie himself. Doubtless there are many Tammas Haggarts, but assuredly they are not typical of Scotland's humorists. The humour of the North is not deficient in what can only be described as "unconscious humour," and this was evidently the kind that Tammas Haggart dealt largely in, since he was accustomed to make jokes which he didn't see himself; but Scottish humour is less characterised by this form of fun than any other. English humour abounds in it. Irish humour is little else.

We are not greatly concerned whether or not the folk of Thrums "had humour," since their author—it is worthy of note by the way, that Mr Barrie describes all his characters as "purely imaginary"—has it in such abundance and even if we are frequently laughing with him at their expense we think none the less of the quaint, leal-hearted bodies for all that. In "the courting of T'nowhead's Bell" and "How Gavin Birse put it to Mag Lownie," two of Barrie's most successful humorous sketches, the fun is all with the reader and the writer.

"A Window in Thrums" is much richer in humour than "Auld Licht Idylls," and in that deeper feeling which we all call pathos—for the two are but degrees of the same thing: a stirring of the heart. To my mind, small though the book of "Idylls" is it might with advantage have been reduced; "David Lunan's Political Reminiscences" is a "gey dreich" chapter that could well be spared, while "A Home for Geniuses" is quite out of place

in "A Window in Thrums," and is indeed considerably below the level of the papers which go to make up "My Lady Nicotine." Let him try never so bravely no man can always write up to his own standard, and Barrie cannot be more severely judged than by the standard of his own best work.

His humour has this peculiarity, that it is often so apparently serious that readers lacking the sense of humour are misled into taking in earnest what was meant in jest. We have an instance of this in "The Strange Case of Sir George Trevelyan and Mr Otto," referred to in the chapter on "Beginnings in Literature." There is another worthy of mention. You will remember that in "Better Dead" the author describes Andrew Riach as being in such straits that he contrived to earn an occasional dishonest shilling by inventing original anecdotes about famous people who were at death's door. In the *Fortnightly Review* for September 1890, Barrie expanded this idea into an article entitled "*Pro Bono Publico*," which contains the copy of an imaginary circular from an imaginary "Society for Providing Materials for Volumes of Reminiscences." This, it is alleged, has been addressed to every person over fifty years of age, and specimens of the reminiscences together with prices of the same are given. Let us take one example:—

"I saw a great deal of Carlyle in those days, and what days they were! If in a genial mood (as was not always the case) Carlyle was the best of company, and, strange to say, I never think of Cheyne

Row now without hearing his loud guffaws. Ah, sage, gone into the night since the days when you and I and F—— and K—— smoked our churchwardens by the warm fireplace, to know you best was to love you most. He who can quote you as a cynic forgets the hearty laugh that took all the malice from your vehement utterances. It was not a laugh at the expense of those you were speaking of, but at your grand honest self. That guffaw was the blast with which you blew over the fabrication that your imagination had built riotously. And that word *blast* reminds me of Carlyle's love for it. 'No. I'm not smoking,' he said to me on the day I had the memorable pleasure of meeting him for the first time. This put me in a predicament, for there was a pipe in his mouth as he spoke, and he was puffing vigorously. Nevertheless, how could I contradict him while I sat, awed, under the shadow of his personality? Carlyle saw my embarrassment, and, like a true gentleman, at once put me at my ease. 'Ay, sir, you're a grand sample of the complete idiot,' he said, in the winning phraseology that has been so much misunderstood; 'we dinna have the marrows of you in Scotland, I'm thinking.' And then he went on to explain that in his young days people did not speak of smoking, but of blasting—'a far more expressive word.' He then launched into a magnificent panegyric of tobacco, declaring that to look back to the days when he did not smoke was a humiliation. 'Smoke as hard as a man may,' he said, dejectedly, 'he can never make up for those lost

days!' Then handing me my hat in the courtliest manner, he said, 'And now, young man, be off to your mother. Always be thoughtful of your mother. I guarantee she would miss you more than I would do!' Thus ended my first meeting with Carlyle." (30s.)

Soon after the appearance of this amusing contribution a German gentleman wrote to the office of the *Fortnightly*, saying that he had been engaged for some time on a volume of reminiscences of German authors, but was short of material, and would be very glad indeed to place an order with the Society to supply as much as would complete his book!

Barrie's humour is essentially his own. It is not of the Mark Twain order; it seldom makes us laugh consumedly, but it keeps us in that constant mood of pleasure described as "chuckling." It is quiet, reserved, never by any chance boisterous; appeals to the intellect and the heart, rather than to the sense of the purely ludicrous or the love of buffoonery—the last of which is so characteristic of English humour and especially of that poor brand known as Jerome's.

Like all true humorists he touches the tenderest chords of pathos with consummate ease and effect. In many of his sketches his fingers sweep the minor chords alone and under his sympathetic touch they vibrate with exquisite sadness. Never the sadness of dull, dismal sorrow; but of sweet melancholy in which hope still lingers. The tragedy of "Jamie's

Home Coming" in "A Window in Thrums" is as sad as anything that was ever written, yet the pathos of it is absolutely unstrained, and we are left with the hope that Jamie did not go from bad to worse, that the awfulness of the very common-place sin he had committed came home to him when he found Jess, and Leeby, and Hendry—all his tiny world—had ceased to be, and though he "was never again seen in Thrums" he left it resolved to live as Jess would have had him, though atonement was no longer possible. Indeed, we are sure of this; for to the strange woman who now lived in the house where he had first toddled to the joy of Jess and Hendry, where he had played so long with Leeby, and where he had found all that is best on this earth if he had only the sense to keep it, to that woman he said, "I'll ask one last favour o' ye: I would like ye to leave me here alane for juist a little while." So into the kitchen he went, and was there "a lang time," on his knees we can well believe, nor were the spirits of Jess or Leeby absent; and they would whisper to Jamie out of their bountiful love that he was forgiven, and he would know it, though he could never forgive himself. Such a chapter as this is enough to give any book distinction, and "A Window in Thrums" contains several quite as masterly, so that its enduring popularity is no surprise, but rather eloquent testimony to the healthy taste of the better-class reading public.

What then are the characteristics which make for greatness in Barrie's books? To my mind, they are

these : his quaint humour, his unstrained pathos, his gift for character portrayal, and, above all, his lack of self-consciousness. He is not a great master of the novel in the sense that his admired Stevenson was. Some discriminating critics regard "Sentimental Tommy" as his masterpiece, others are equally certain that distinction belongs to "The Little Minister." For my poor part I can agree with neither, as it seems to me Barrie's limitation affects him precisely in that talent which prevents his producing a great novel : his constructive ability, so essential to a long sustained narrative, is by no means conspicuous. For the same reason he is not likely to produce a great play.

To start with his first attempt at a novel, "When a Man's Single." Would it be difficult to specify a dozen books produced any year (and forgotten six months after) which are not better constructed examples of the novel than this? I don't think it would; but it would be difficult to find in these more evenly workmanlike productions, so much individuality, so many cameos of character, such ebullient humour. Nor is "The Little Minister," considered merely as a novel, a shining example of the art which less gifted men have developed more successfully : it hangs somewhat loosely together, yet its charm lies in this very fact. We do not find ourselves regarding it as a continuous story, but rather as a portrait gallery in which the author exhibits to us a group of masterly studies. We are interested in the characters of the story

more keenly than in the story itself. So, too, with "Sentimental Tommy," in which there are few of the elements usually regarded as essential to the making of a great novel. It is not a great novel. But it is something as priceless, something rarer. It abounds in revelations of character, in sketches of humble life, in humorous interludes, all so true, tender, and sympathetic, that the constructive faults of the book are greatly outweighed.

In brief, the qualities which give distinction to "The Little Minister," to "Sentimental Tommy," and to its sequel, are precisely those that won all our hearts to "Auld Licht Idylls" and "A Window in Thrums," and I make bold to say that Barrie has nowhere surpassed and never will excel the best chapters of the last-mentioned book. In all his works since "Auld Licht Idylls" there are passages in which he is at his best; but if any one book of his may be called his masterpiece, that, in my humble judgment, is "Margaret Ogilvy." The most notable characteristic of all great artists—poets, painters, actors, authors—is the lack of self-consciousness. The moment a man is self-conscious he destroys his art, dispels the illusion which captivates the reader or the listener. Only an entire absence of this defect could make such a book as "Margaret Ogilvy" possible.

The absence of self-consciousness means the presence of the artistic temperament, and no one has written on this with such deep insight as Barrie himself. There is a brilliant passage in "Senti-

mental Tommy" which illustrates it to perfection. You remember how Tommy undermines Cathro's popularity as a deputy letter-writer for the unlettered folk of Thrums (nowadays that class does not exist) by producing epistles which had far more effect on their recipients than any the schoolmaster had ever written. Tommy's masterpiece in the epistolary art was a letter from Betsy Grieve to Mrs Dinnie in returning thanks for a wedding gift. Mrs Dinnie's daughter Janet had long ago entered into a romantic compact with Betsy that both should marry on the same day, "but Janet died, and so it was a sad letter Tommy had to write to her mother." Cathro caught Tommy gloating over a draught of the fateful letter in the schoolroom to the neglect of his studies, and bringing him before the class, to whom he read over the letter, he proceeded with mixed feelings of envy, admiration, and indignation, to "unbottle Tommy for the details."

" 'You little sachet,' cried the Dominie, 'how did you think of it?' 'I think I thought I was Betsy at the time,' Tommy answered, with proper awe.

" 'She told me nothing about the weeping-willow at the grave,' said the Dominie, perhaps in self-defence. 'You hadna speired if there was one,' retorted Tommy jealously.

" 'What made you think of it?' 'I saw it might come in neat.' (He had said in the letter that the weeping-willow reminded him of the days when

Janet's bonny hair hung down kissing her waist just as the willow kissed the grave).

“ ‘Willows don't hang so low as you seem to think,’ said the Dominie. ‘Yes they do,’ replied Tommy; ‘I walked three miles to see one to make sure. I was near putting in another beautiful bit about weeping-willows.’

“ ‘Well, why didn't you?’ Tommy looked up with an impudent snigger. ‘You could never guess,’ he said.

“ ‘Answer me at once,’ thundered his preceptor. ‘Was it because——’ ‘No,’ interrupted Tommy, so conscious of Mr Cathro's inferiority that to let him go on seemed waste of time. ‘It was because, though it is a beautiful thing in itself, I felt a servant lassie wouldna have thought o't. I was sweer,’ he admitted with a sigh; then firmly, ‘but I cut it out.’

“ Again Cathro admired, reluctantly. The hack does feel the difference between himself and the artist. Cathro might possibly have had the idea, he could not have cut it out. But the hack is sometimes, or usually, or nearly always, the artist's master, and can make him suffer for his dem'd superiority.

“ ‘What made you snivel when you read the pathetic bits?’ asked Cathro, with itching fingers. ‘I was so sorry for Peter and Mrs Dinnie,’ Tommy answered, a little puzzled himself now. ‘I saw them so clear.’

“ ‘And yet until Betsy came to you, you had never heard tell of them?’ ‘No,’

“‘And on reflection you don’t care a doit about them?’ ‘N—no.’

“‘And you care as little for Betsy?’ ‘No now, but at the time I a kind of thought I was to be married to Andrew.’

“‘And even while you blubbered you were saying to yourself, “What a clever billie I am.”’”

This is the scene which, as the reader will remember, ends with the Dominie picking up a charred stick and branding his amazing pupil on the forehead with the letters “S.T.”—one of the rare forced or artificial incidents to be met with in Barrie’s pages. You feel the author has said at this juncture, “Now, or never, I must work in something to fit my title,” and you heartily wish your favourite had let Cathro “end the scene with the strap.” But this in no degree detracts from the great merit of the scene as the keynote to Tommy’s character; it only goes to support the assertion that Barrie lacks the gift which many very ordinary novelists possess—that of “jining their flats.”

It is in no grudging spirit I register here, alongside of his great gifts, the qualities in which, as it seems to me, Mr Barrie is somewhat ill-favoured; for an admirer who can see no speck of failure in his hero may safely be regarded as blind in one eye. The greatest of artists have their limitations; perfection is not of this world or its inhabitants, and the great are only distinguished from the small in the distance that separates them from their lines of limitation. In other parts of this little book I dwell

in ampler detail on the more outstanding characteristics of its subject, and here I would only add one more sentence, which touches also one of the tiny flaws in Mr Barrie's marble. To anyone who has read all his books and most of his uncollected writings, a curious frequency of repetition will appear: if he has once used an especially happy simile, a more than usually striking phrase, he has evidently wagged his head, like Tommy, with sheer pleasure at his own conceit, and remembered it long afterwards, so that the same thought will come to him again and yet again, and he will be so proud of it that he will use it with the old pleasure—and the old wagging of the head, we may suppose—not twice, but three or four times over.

HIS KNOWLEDGE OF
WOMANKIND

HIS KNOWLEDGE OF WOMANKIND

ONE of the strongest points of difference in the characteristics of Scots and English is concerned with love and womankind. The Scottish mother who will talk about love to her daughters and discuss sweathearts with them is a rarity; in England, the love stories of their daughters are the commonest gossip of mothers. When a Scottish lad and lassie are in love it is a question for themselves, and they take it too seriously to chatter at large about their feelings; even in their own home circles they neither care to speak of it, nor to hear the subject discussed. There are scores of instances in which the Scots are reticent where the English are communicative; but this contrast is particularly marked in the matter of love.

Barrie confesses to the embarrassment occasioned by merely writing a love-passage. He says: "They tell me—the Sassenach tell me—that in time I shall be able without a blush to make Albert say, 'darling,' and even gather her (the heroine) up in his arms, but I begin to doubt it. The moment sees me as shy as ever; I still find it advisable to lock the door, and then—no witness save the dog—I 'do' it dourly with my teeth clenched, while the dog retreats into the far

corner and moans. The bolder Englishman (I am told) will write a love chapter and then go out, quite coolly, to dinner ; but such goings on are contrary to the Scotch nature ; even the great novelists dared not. Conceive Mr Stevenson left alone with a hero, a heroine, and a proposal impending (he does not know where to look). Sir Walter, in the same circumstances, gets out of the room by making his love scenes take place between the end of one chapter and the beginning of the next, but he could afford to do anything, and the small fry must e'en to their task, moan the dog as he may."

In this amusing bit of autobiography the novelist is only using his happy knack of exaggeration to emphasise a truth which is apparent to those who have seriously studied the subject. But, despite this whimsical description of his diffidence when approaching the tender passion, pen in hand, no one who has been a close student of Barrie's writings can have failed to be struck with his remarkable insight into woman's heart, his grip of female character. I well remember that one of the first questions I put to myself, when reading his early works, was, "How does this young bachelor know so much about women?" It puzzled me for a time, but the day came when I understood perfectly. Of that I shall have something to say further on.

There is scarcely any phase of woman which we do not find illustrated in Barrie's books : the holy joys of motherhood, the beauties of wifely love, the little meannesses of the sex, their frequent

superiority, their occasional inferiority to man, their love of show and gossip, their power of self-sacrifice. All these, and more, does Barrie interpret, and always with absolute fidelity. But, above all, is he insistent on the nobility of womankind. In "The Little Minister" he observes: "The most gladsome thing in the world is that few of us fall very low; the saddest that, with such capabilities, we seldom rise high. Of those who stand perceptibly above their fellows, I have known very few, only Mr Carfrae (one of the Auld Licht ministers) and two or three women." And again: "There are those who say that women cannot love each other, but it is not true. Woman is not undeveloped man, but something better." Here is the keynote of his conception of woman, and if any doubt its truth, let them turn to "Margaret Ogilvy."

Where in fiction have we a more lovable portrait of a good woman than Margaret Dishart? Where a finer picture of heroism in lowly life than dear old Jess, who looked out on her little world so long a prisoner behind that window in Thrums? Nor would it be very easy to mention a heroine more bewitching than Babbie; while Jean Myles, in another and very different way, is as true a type of Scots character as I have ever met in books. Even that pathetic, if slightly unreal, figure, "The Painted Lady," is a tiny masterpiece, in which the author has symbolised and exalted, not unduly, the saddest of all woman-kind—she who loves not wisely, but too well, and

whose first sin is often next-door to innocence. One shudders to think what an ugly character the "Painted Lady" might have been, fashioned by the hands of a less skilful writer. Through the pages of his books many kinds of women flit, but the mother of Grizel is the only one whose skirts are soiled; and she is pictured so delicately that no true-hearted woman nor clean-hearted man can regard her as other than a good woman wasted by a base deceiver.

Dear old Jess we all love; her long years of thankfulness to God through all her infirmities teach a lesson in the nobility of Scots character and the solace of religion to those of simple faith; for assuredly Jess and Leebie McQuimpha had rich store of that which is "more than Norman blood." And where is there a more poignant little tragedy than the story of poor Nanny Coutts? It is essentially typical of Scots character; yet I am persuaded it is equally true to womankind the world over, as the leading traits of woman are universal. Poor Nanny had a worthless man, who was a general favourite in the town—how often is this the case with worthless men!—and while he was hob-nobbing with his cronies, she was working her life out at the loom to keep the creature in the same rude comfort as his friends obtained by their own efforts. No wonder Nanny was sour and unfriendly with her neighbours, who all too readily misjudged her. "What a little story it is," says our author, "and how few are the words required to tell it! He

was a bad husband to her, and she kept it secret. That is Nanny's life summed up. It is all that was left behind when her coffin went down the brae. Did she love him to the end, or was she only doing what she thought her duty? It is not for me even to guess. A good woman who suffers is altogether beyond man's reckoning. To such heights of self-sacrifice we cannot rise. It crushes us; it ought to crush us on to our knees. For us who saw Nanny, infirm, shrunken, and so weary, yet a type of the noblest womanhood, suffering for years, and misunderstood to her end, what expiation can there be?"

I have known Scots folks who have denied that Jean Myles, the mother of Tommy Sandys, was a true portrait, and have scouted the idea of any woman sending such letters to Thrums as those which Barrie writes for her during her days of terrible poverty in London; but they who question the fidelity of the character revealed in those letters are no true students of Scottish characteristics. Independence is Scotland's national trait; and it is especially marked in the women folk in all matters that relate to their social standing, where, indeed, independence becomes pride. Jean Myles was misled by a masterful man, and found herself after his miserable death in the direst straits; but she had left in Thrums the tradition of marrying a man of means, and I hold that she would have been no true Scotswoman if, when she sat in her London hovel with gaunt despair on her hearthstone, she had done any-

thing but what she did — determine to struggle bravely on and write to Thrums about her “silks and satins,” and her son being clothed in his “velvets.” This was very foolish pride, perhaps; but it was very like a Scotswoman; and I like Jean Myles the better for it. Do we not all admire those whose spirit of independence impels them to hide their poverty—no matter what the motive may be—and fight the bitter fight unaided, rather than write whining letters, begging friends for assistance? I think we do; and it is this very spirit of dour, dogged independence that has made the Scots what they are.

The tragedy of Jean Myles is really one of Barrie’s most powerful studies. She married a “magerful” man because the man she really loved proved a coward at the wooing, though he turned out a humble hero in the sad after-years. As Jean, on her death-bed, said to Tommy: “All decent women, laddie, has a horror of being fought about. I’m no sure but what that’s just the difference atween good ones and ill ones, but this man had a power o’er me; and if Aaron had just struck him. Instead o’ meddling he turned white, and I couldna help contrasting them, and thinking how masterful your father looked. Fine I kent he was a brute, and yet I couldna help admiring him for looking so magerful. . . . Laddie, it doesna do for a man to be a coward afore a woman that’s fond o’ him. A woman will thole a man’s being anything except like hersel’. When I was sure

Aaron was a coward, I stood still as death, waiting to ken wha's I was to be."

I fear that woman, superior though she be in many respects to the male sex, will always fall a victim to the "magerful man"; for both men and women are strangely prone to admire in each other the qualities least worthy of admiration. Our author never says this in so many words; but I think he gives evidence of believing it. When Babbie allows Gavin to reprimand her, Barrie writes: "Now (but perhaps I should not tell this), unless she is his wife, a man is shot with a thrill of exultation every time a pretty woman allows him to upbraid her." On the other hand, that man may be teased by the woman he has upbraided, and only experience pleasure in the process. "At twenty-one," says the novelist, "a man is a musical instrument given to the other sex, but it is not as instruments learned at school, for when she sits down to it she cannot tell what tune she is about to play. That is because she has no notion of what the instrument is capable. Babbie's kind-heartedness, her gaiety, her coquetry, her moments of sadness, had been a witch's fingers, and Gavin was still trembling under their touch. Even in being taken to task by her there was a charm, for every pout of her mouth, every shake of her head, said, 'You like me, and therefore you have given me the right to tease you.' Men sign these agreements without reading them. But, indeed, man is a stupid animal at the best, and thinks all his life

that he did not propose, until he blurted out, 'I love you.'

Curiosity is, I suppose, the common heritage of the daughters of Eve, but a trait which is peculiar to Scotswomen of the peasant class is a strange shyness in the company of their social betters. They will go with fear and trepidation on a visit to the manse, or the house of some well-to-do person, sit in the drawing-room "like a stookie," with never a word to say in the conversation, appear helplessly embarrassed, and quite unobservant, yet they will go back to their own little homes with sufficient gossip about their visit to So-and-so's "grand hoose" to last them for months, not a sentence of the conversation having been lost on them, not a tiny detail of the house furniture having been omitted in their mental inventory. Barrie knows this well and he never wrote a truer passage than that (from "Visitors at the Manse" in "A Window in Thrums") wherein he describes how Leeby went with Hendry to call on Mrs Dishart and came home with an amazing fund of information about the manse, although she had appeared to be noticing nothing all the time her visit lasted. Let us quote a few sentences from the chapter mentioned:—

"I sat down to a book by the kitchen fire; but as Leeby became communicative, I read less and less. While she spoke she was baking bannocks with all the might of her, and Jess, leaning forward in her chair, was arranging them in a semicircle round the fire.

“ ‘Na,’ was the first remark of Leeby’s that came between me and my book, ‘it is no new furniture.’

“ ‘But there were three cart-loads o’t, Leeby, sent on frae Edinbory. Tibbie Birse helpit to lift it in, and she said the parlour furniture beat a’.’

“ ‘Ou, it’s substantial, but it is no new. I sepad¹ it had been bocht cheap second-hand, for the chair I had was terrible scratched like, an’, what’s mair, the airm-chair was a heap shinier than the rest.’

“ ‘Ay, ay, I wager it had been stuffed. Tibbie said the carpet cowed for grandeur?’

“ ‘Oh, I dinna deny it’s a guid carpet; but if it’s been turned once it’s been turned half a dozen times, so it’s far frae new. Ay, an’ forby, it was rale threadbare aneath the table, so you may be sure they’ve been cuttin’t an’ puttin’ the worn pairt whaur it would be least seen.’

“ ‘They say ’at there’s twa grand gas-brackets i’ the parlour, an’ a wonderfu’ gasoliery i’ the dinin’-room?’

“ ‘We wasna i’ the dinin’-room, so I ken naething about the gasoliery; but I’ll tell ye what the gas-brackets is. I recognised them immeditly. Ye mind the auld gasoliery i’ the dinin’-room had twa lights? Ay, then, the parlour brackets is made oot o’ the auld gasoliery.’

“ ‘Weel, Leeby, as sure as ye’re standin’ there, that passed through my head as sune as Tibbie mentioned them!’”

¹ See note on this word under “The Scots Tongue in Barrie’s Books.”

Touching the appearance of the bedroom, Jess was inquisitive.

“ ‘The room lookit weel, ye say?’ ”

“ ‘Yes, but it was economically furnished. There was nae carpet below the wax-cloth; na, there was nane below the bed either.’ ”

“ ‘Was’t a grand bed?’ ”

“ ‘It had a fell lot o’ brass about it, but there was juist one pair o’ blankets. I thoct it was gey shabby, hae’n the ewer a different pattern frae the basin; ay, an’ there was juist a poker in the fire-place, there was nae tangs.’ ” And so on.

In Thrums, as elsewhere, lasses grow up naturally into women who expect to be “asked” and married some day, and the tragedy is sometimes that they are never asked—again, that they have given their consent. With the men thought of marriage comes suddenly. Barrie thus describes love’s awakening in Thrums: “Into the life of every man, and no woman, there comes a moment when he learns that he is held eligible for marriage. A girl gives him the jag, and it brings out the perspiration. Of the issue elsewhere of this stab with a bodkin let others speak: in Thrums its commonest effect is to make the callant’s body take a right angle to his legs, for he has been touched in the fifth button, and he backs away brokenwinded. By-and-by, however, he is at his work—among the turnip-shoots, say—guffawing and clapping his corduroys, with pauses for uneasy meditation, and there he ripens with the swedes, so that by the back-end of the

year he has discovered, and exults to know, that the reward of manhood is neither more nor less than this sensation of the ribs. Soon thereafter, or at worst, sooner or later (for by holding out he only puts the women's dander up), he is led captive to the Cuttle Well. This well has the reputation of being the place where it is most easily said."

The proposal among the Auld Lights was a ticklish business, as witness those delightful humorous sketches, "How Gavin Birse put it to Mag Lownie," and "The Courting of T'nowhead's Bell." A photo of the swain slipped into his sweetheart's hand was generally the beginning of the ordeal. "Some night Bell would have 'seen him to the door,' and they would have stared sheepishly at each other before saying good-night. The parting salutation given, the grieve would still have stood his ground, and Bell would have waited with him. At last, 'Will ye hae's, Bell?' would have dropped from his half-reluctant lips; and Bell would have mumbled, 'Ay,' with her thumb in her mouth. 'Guid nicht to ye, Bell,' would be the next remark—'Guid nicht to ye, Jeames,' the answer; the humble door would close softly, and Bell and her lad would have been engaged."

But after the marriage the question of management arises, and perhaps it is not only in Thrums that the husband must have "the knack o't" if there's to be peace and happiness around the fireside. Tammas Haggart is Barrie's character who is always honoured with the observations

on this head. Let me quote from "Auld Licht Idylls":—

"‘They’re kittle cattle, the women,’ said the farmer o’ Craigiebuckle, a little gloomily. ‘I’ve often thocht maiterimony is no onlike the lucky bags th’ auld wifies has at the muckly (the fair). There’s prizes an’ blanks baith inside, but, losh, ye’re far frae sure what ye’ll draw oot when ye put in yer han’.’

"‘Ou, weel,’ said Tammas complacently, ‘there’s truth in what ye say; but the women can be managed if ye have the knack.’

"‘Some o’ them,’ said Craigiebuckle woefully.

"‘Ye had yer wark wi’ the wife yersel, Tammas, so ye had,’ observed Lang Tammas, unbending to suit his company.

"‘Ye’re speakin’ aboot the bit wife’s bural,’ said Tammas Haggart with a chuckle; ‘ay, ay, that brocht her to reason.’”

Tammas, who was ever a diplomatist, had gained the “upper han’” of his wife by ostentatiously holding her “wake,” in the old Thrums fashion, when she was not dead but had only quarrelled with him and taken up her abode at a friend’s house across the street, whence she witnessed the proceedings!

"‘She’s gone this fower year,’ Tammas said, when he had finished his story, ‘but up to the end I had no more trouble wi’ Chirsty. No, I had the knack o’ her.’

"‘I’ve heard tell, though,’ said the sceptical

Craigiebuckle, 'as Chirsty only cam back to ye because she cudna bear to see the fowk makin' sae free wi' the whisky!'"

Tammas, presumably, became so sinfully puffed up about his knack of managing women that when we meet him again in "A Window in Thrums" he is openly boasting of his belief that he could have managed even Mary Queen of Scots.

"'Ah, they can be managed,' said Tammas complacently. 'There's naebody nat'rally safter wi' a pretty stocky o' a bit wumany than mysel'; but for a' that, if I had been Mary's man I would hae stood nane o' her tantrums. "Na, Mary, my lass," I would hae said, "this winna do; na, na, ye're a bonny body, but ye maun mind 'at man's the superior; ay, man's the lord o' creation, an' so ye maun juist sing sma'." That's hoo I would hae managed Mary, the speerity crittur 'at she was.'

"'Ye would hae haen yer wark cut oot for ye, Tammas.'

"'Ilka mornin',' pursued Tammas, 'I would hae said to her, "Mary," I would hae said, "wha's to wear thae breeks the day, you or me?" Ay, syne I would hae ordered her to kindle the fire, or if I had been the king, of coorse I would hae telt her instead to ring the bell an' hae the cloth laid for the breakfast. Ay, that's the wy to mak the like o' Mary respect' ye.'"

All this proves pretty plainly, I think, that Mr Barrie has studied woman to some purpose, and is intimately acquainted with all her varying moods, as

well as the influence she exercises on, and the feelings she arouses in, the other sex. Yet, as I have already said, he had attained to this knowledge while still a very young man, and a bachelor to boot. Well he has revealed the secret himself in that classic of filial love, "Margaret Ogilvy." For there he writes: "We had read somewhere that a novelist is better equipped than most of his trade if he knows himself and one woman, and my mother said, 'You know yourself' (there was never a woman who knew less about herself than she), and she would add dolefully, 'But I doubt I'm the only woman you know well.'" And he admits the truth of this. His mother is his heroine in all his stories, and his mother was a typical Scotswoman, full of the nobility of character for which her race and sex are distinguished, and possessing also, we are glad to know, their little weaknesses. "In one of my books," he says (it is *The Little Minister*), "there is a mother who is setting off with her son for the town to which he had been called as minister, and she pauses on the threshold to ask him anxiously if he thinks her bonnet 'sets' her. A reviewer said she acted thus, not because she cared how she looked, but for the sake of her son. This, I remember, amused my mother very much." The incident referred to throws a vivid sidelight on woman's character, and it is one of her most lovable sides that it illumines; for the woman who is not mindful of looking well is not altogether feminine, and it is the feminine woman that men

love. Barrie found in his mother a good woman, a woman of strongly marked character, yet essentially typical. That he knew her well there can be no doubt, and here was a fund of knowledge which in the hands of an artist was sure to prove inexhaustible. For, after all, one good woman is very like another.

MOTHER AND SON

MOTHER AND SON

THE mother of a great author, of a great man in any walk of life, is, next to that man himself, worthy of study. Certainly more deserving of our consideration than his father, as it would be idle to deny that the influence of the mother over her son is invariably stronger than that of the father: it is the mother who always succeeds in getting nearest to the heart of her child. It would be an easy task to gather instance upon instance where our greatest men have gloried in the power they derived from their mothers, to mention women who have unmistakably endowed their sons with the qualities which have won them fame and fortune. But our present concern is with a particular case, and there is neither the occasion nor the opportunity for generalisations.

There need be no doubt in the mind of anyone familiar with the writings of J. M. Barrie that if he were asked to name the one influence that has guided, quickened, inspired his whole life, his simple answer would be: "My mother." Long ago—at least it seems so to those of us who were young then, but perhaps it was no more than ten years back—the *Scotsman*, which has never been a hearty friend to Barrie or the so-called "Kailyard" school,

said that the author of "A Window in Thrums" was a man who would make "copy" of the bones of his grandmother, or passed some such sinister remark. What this oracle of Auld Reekie said when "Margaret Ogilvy" appeared I know not; but doubtless it would be the familiar journalistic "I told you so." Yet I venture to assert that the noblest book which Barrie had given to the world is none other than that in which—to use the vile and vulgar phrase—he has made "copy" of his mother.

"Made copy!" What an abominable shallowness of heart the phrase betrays in the one who uses it seriously against anything Barrie has written. He has made a whole "toon" of quiet, humble, God-serving men and women live again, that all the world may know them and be the better for their acquaintance. He has raised to the memory of his mother the most enduring memorial, the most beautiful monument, that ever sprung from filial love. If he had done nothing more than draw that sweet picture of a good woman's humble, happy life, he would have deserved well of his generation. It was a delicate, almost an impossible, task to take up, and only an artist of the first order could have dared to hope for success in it. That he has succeeded no one who knows Scottish character or can appreciate the humour and pathos of lowly life is likely to doubt.

Margaret Ogilvy—the custom of calling married women by their maiden names obtains to this day in some parts of rural Scotland—was a typical Scots-

woman. I have heard it said by people who knew her as a neighbour that she was “naething by ord’nar’ grand to hae a book written aboot her.” I am willing, nay glad, to believe she was no rarer a creature than the good Scotswoman of the cottage class, whose name is legion. Had Margaret Ogilvy been sharply different from the class to which she belonged, then her life were less worthy of an artist’s portrayal, even though that artist were her son. For the everlasting value of “Margaret Ogilvy” is that here we have the intimate life of a woman whose like might be found in many thousands of Scottish homes. And the fact is not the least of Scotland’s glories. The only thing—and no small thing—that gives her distinction above her class, is that she was the mother of J. M. Barrie. The instinct of motherhood is strong amongst Scotswomen. Margaret Ogilvy often said she would have liked fine to be the mother of this great man or that; never the wife, mark you, but the mother—the difference is immense. She even admitted she would have liked to be the mother of R. L. Stevenson; though she vainly pretended to think nothing of his works, in order to reserve her admiration for the efforts of her own boy. Many a Scotswoman would “like fine” to have been the mother of J. M. Barrie.

If Margaret Ogilvy differed from her class in any particular, it was in her close comradeship with her children, and especially with her author son. Comradeship is the only word I can think of to suggest

my meaning. Margaret Ogilvy seems to have been a chum to all her children. And it is precisely this that the average Scottish mother is not. I may be wrong, but I have formed the opinion, based on a good deal of observation, that the English mother is far more intimate with her family; she will hear their confidences, spread their praise, with a readiness, a glibness, that is utterly foreign to the Scottish mother. Nor do I think the English race is the better for this: there are far more spoilt children south of the Tweed than north of it. As a rule the Scottish mother is undemonstrative to and about her children; we all know she "likes fine" to hear them spoken well of, but she often pretends to take pleasure in denouncing them for feckless bairns, of whom she is "black affronted"—yet, let anyone else miscall them, and her tune is changed! The Scots mother, in a word, is more of a Spartan in the rearing of her family than her sister of the south. And it seems to me that, although her son tells us the kissing of her hand to him as he looked back from the road to the window where she stood was the only English custom Margaret Ogilvy ever learned, the warmth of her family affection was so great that its outward manifestations—but only these—were almost more English than Scottish. This may be mere supposition, but it is an impression which I do not feel justified in suppressing.

Margaret Ogilvy was poor in worldly gear until that fine day when her son's success brought to the modest home wealth undreamed of. But had she

been born to riches and reared in luxury, her nature was such that she would still have been, in all the goodness of heart, the Margaret Ogilvy we know and admire. Still, it was best, I am persuaded, that she was precisely as she was. To have had wealth in those days would have been to lose the pure uncloyed delight that came when she got her six hair-bottomed chairs, for which she had saved up in three-penny bits. These humble triumphs of the poor are joys to which the wealthy cannot aspire, and many an unknown Scotswoman has lived such golden hours. The altering of worn clothes to fit one member of the family after another, so charmingly described by Barrie, is another of the many little things in which Margaret Ogilvy's life was the counterpart of her neighbours'. But we cannot suppose that her largeness of heart, her naïve humour, her grown-up girlishness, were so common; and these are characteristics which endear her memory to all who know her through the books of her son.

I say books, for it is not in "Margaret Ogilvy" alone that we meet her; she finds her way into almost everything Mr Barrie has written about women. She is the very heart and soul of dear old Jess M'Qumpha, she is all that is most precious in Margaret Dishart, there are some of her qualities in Jean Myles, and even in Grizel there are touches of her girlhood—a girlhood which the author says he seems to know as though it were coeval with his boyhood, so "far ben" had he crept into his

mother's heart. "The reason my books deal with the past instead of with the life I myself have known," he writes, "is simply this, that I soon grow tired of writing tales unless I can see a little girl, of whom my mother has told me, wandering confidently through the pages. Such a grip has her memory of her girlhood had upon me since I was a boy of six. Those innumerable talks with her made her youth as vivid to me as my own, and so much more quaint, for, to a child, the oddest of things, and the most richly-coloured picture-book, is that his mother was once a child also, and the contrast between what she is and what she was is perhaps the source of all humour. My mother's father, the hero of her life, died nine years before I was born, and I remember this with bewilderment, so familiarly does the weather-beaten mason's figure rise before me from the old chair on which I was nursed and now write my books."

There is no passage in all that Barrie has written more essentially Scottish in character than the delightfully humorous account of his mother on the prospect of his election to a well-known London club, for which he had been nominated by the good fairy of his literary life — Frederick Greenwood. Thirty pounds for admission to a club seemed to a woman who had scraped along most of her life on shillings "terrible wasterfu'," and she had naturally much to say on the subject, while the candidate for election had to plead his case against a withering fire of sarcasm.

"If I get in it will be because the editor is supporting me."

"It's the first ill thing I ever heard of him."

"You don't think he is to get any of the thirty pounds, do you?"

"Deed if I did I should be better pleased, for he has been a good friend to us; but what maddens me is that every penny of it should go to those bare-faced scoundrels."

"What bare-faced scoundrels?"

"Them that have the club."

"But all the members have the club between them."

"Havers! I'm no' to be caught with chaff."

"But don't you believe me?"

"I believe they've filled your head with their stories till you swallow whatever they tell you. If the place belongs to the members, why do they have to pay thirty pounds?"

"To keep it going."

"They dinna have to pay for their dinners, then?"

"Oh yes, they have to pay extra for dinner."

"And a gey black price, I'm thinking."

"Well, five or six shillings."

"Is that all? Losh, it's nothing, I wonder they dinna raise the price."

How like the Scotswoman is that little bit of sarcasm. And later on when she hears that there are about twelve members of committee, she observes: "A dozen! Ay, ay, that makes two

pound ten a-piece." Yet we know all this was only banter, though it arose from the pathetic fact that "money meant so much to her." But we can well believe that "even at her poorest she was the most cheerful giver." In the early days of his London work his mother and sister, he tells us, used to reckon the length of his articles and calculate what he got for them before reading them. "I remember once overhearing a discussion between them about whether that sub-title meant another sixpence." How mercenary! says the shallow reader. How human! says the student of character. If Barrie had chosen to dissemble here and tell us that his mother and sister cared only for the fame he was making, only for the glory of seeing his words in print, he might readily have been believed, but I for one rejoice in his trueness. To the mother who has only known poverty all her life, the amazing thing is not that a son of hers can get his writings published, but that he can earn so much by means that to her simple mind seem little less than magic.

But with the son it was otherwise. It is said with truth that every man at one period of his life writes or works mainly to please a woman. That woman may be either his mother or his sweetheart—sometimes his wife. In Barrie's case it was his mother: "I weaved sufficiently well to please her," he says, "which has been my only steadfast ambition since I was a little boy." To him the payment for his writings was important only as it would assist

him to add to the comforts of his mother's life. It was a constant wonder to her that any London editor could be so "doited" as to think the stories of the Auld Lights sufficiently interesting to the grand folk who read his paper. Nor is this surprising, since all the sketches which founded Mr Barrie's early fame were the merest commonplaces to her. Indeed, but that Margaret Ogilvy in her early days had been a member of the Auld Licht congregation—she attended the South Free Church with her husband during most of her married life—the world might never have known the pleasure which "Auld Licht Idylls" and the other Barrie masterpieces have brought into it, as it was largely from his mother's recollections that the novelist wrote. Probably her simple heart never permitted her to realise this.

So potent is the influence which J. M. Barrie's mother has exercised on him, so intimately is she revealed to us in all his work, we can scarcely think of him without thinking of her. Her child-like faith in God, the youthful humour which she never lost, and which remained strong even in her days of sickness and trial, her ever evident sympathy with and absorbing interest in all forms of lowly life: all these good and precious things we recognise in her gifted son and in his books. She was and is his inspiration, of her he wrote and for her; so that we are tempted when reading some of his finest things to ask ourselves, "How much of this do we owe to Margaret Ogilvy?" His whole life seems to have been bound up with hers in a way

that was as uncommon as it was beautiful; they understood each other perfectly. Writing of his call to her death-bed he says: "They told her that I was on my way home, and she said with a confident smile, 'He will come as quick as trains can bring him.' That is my reward, that is what I got for my books. Everything I could do for her in this life I have done since I was a boy: I look back through the years and I cannot see the smallest thing left undone." Now, that is a daring thing for any man to say. I have seen these words quoted by those who understood not, and used as a peg whereon to hang a jeer at the author's expense. I knew that paragraph before ever I read a word of "Margaret Ogilvy," and it prejudiced me against the book, but I had only *read* the volume once when, on reaching this, one of its closing pages, I could say with all my heart, "I believe it." I believe he did all that lay in his power to please and serve his mother, and yet I believe he did nothing more for her than she deserved.

One of the most beautiful passages in his story of his mother's life is the following: "She brings the Testament again; it was always lying within her reach; it is the lock of hair she left me when she died. And when she has read for a long time she 'gives me a look,' as we say in the north, and I go out, to leave her alone with God. She had been but a child when her mother died, and so she fell early into the way of saying her prayers with no earthly listener. Often and often I have found her on her

knees, but I always went softly away, closing the door. I never heard her pray, but I know very well how she prayed, and that, when that door was shut, there was not a day in God's sight between the worn woman and the little child." This displays an insight into his mother's character that is almost uncanny.

Another noble passage may appropriately close this brief sketch : "In her happiest moments—and never was a happier woman—her mouth did not of a sudden begin to twitch, and tears to lie on the mute blue eyes in which I have read all I know and would ever care to write. For when you looked into my mother's eyes you knew, as if He had told you, why God sent her into the world—it was to open the minds of all who looked to beautiful thoughts. And that is the beginning and end of literature. Those eyes that I cannot see until I was six years old have guided me through life, and I pray God they may remain my only earthly judge to the last. They were never more my guide than when I helped to put her to earth, not whimpering because my mother had been taken away after seventy-six glorious years of life, but exulting in her even at the grave."

HIS KNOWLEDGE OF BOYS

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It is always a good test of a man's heart to find out whether the memory of his boyhood remains fresh and green. If you know a man who loves to talk of his boyhood and his boy friends, and seems to remember every harmless prank, every foolish little episode, as clearly as though it had happened yesterday, you know a man whose heart remains as healthy and happy as it always is in the radiant morning of life. In these days of problem novels and "sunless hearts" it is a fortunate thing that amongst our popular authors we have a noble band whose writings betray their keen sympathy with boyhood, their possession of the healthy, boyish heart.

But there is no contemporary author whose love and knowledge of boys, whose delight in his own boyhood, are so strongly marked as those qualities are in the books of J. M. Barrie. It is one thing to be able to write books for boys, and another thing to be able to write books about boys. The art of pleasing the youthful reader of fiction is a comparatively easy one, but the art of entrancing adult readers with the story of a boy is given only to the few. Indeed it is something more than art; it is a gift that comes direct from Nature.

Barrie is one of the few who have it in most liberal measure. In "Tommy and Grizel," he says: "What is genius? It is the power to be again a boy at will." And this power is his.

His works abound in references to boys and boyhood; but in the first instance one is probably anxious to know something from himself concerning his own young days, and he has not been shy of telling us about these. In "Margaret Ogilvy" we have frequent glimpses of Barrie the boy revealed to us by Barrie the man. And what a quaint little boy he must have been! Think of his absurdly pathetic attempts to bring laughter to his mother's face when an elder brother died and Margaret Ogilvy was stricken with grief: "I suppose I was an odd little figure," he writes. "I have been told that my anxiety to brighten her gave my face a strained look and put a tremor into the joke (I would stand on my head in the bed, my feet against the wall, and then cry, excitedly: 'Are you laughing, mother?'), and perhaps what made her laugh was something I was unconscious of, but she did laugh suddenly now and then, whereupon I screamed exultantly to that dear sister who was ever in waiting to come and see the sight, but by the time she came the soft face was wet again."

His childish joy when he got his mother to laugh is one of the most beautiful things in a beautiful book. He told her that he had been keeping count of how often she laughed, the doctor having suggested to him that to tell her of this quaint idea

would be to add another laugh to the list. "Not only did she laugh then, but again when I put the laugh down, so that, though it was really one laugh with a tear in the middle, I counted it as two."

I suppose that the boyhood of the most ordinary mortal has some features which are identical with that of the genius. Though there is distinct individuality shown in the incident which Barrie has thus described for us, a point on which he dwells more than once concerns a feature of boyhood which I believe to be very general—the delusion of having participated in events which happened before our birth. We have all, I fancy, experienced this. There were things in our very young days—when our minds were blank tablets on which not a line had yet been engraved—things that have been told us by our parents, stories of facts, and fables also, that have stuck in our memories and grown up with us, so that in later years we seem to have lived them instead of having only heard them, the occasion of their telling being quite forgotten.

There were stories that Barrie heard as he sat by his mother's knee when a little boy, and the features of these tales were so implanted in his memory that as he grew he seemed to recollect their happening more clearly than events that had really taken place in his own boyhood. "I have seen many weary on-dings of snow," he says, "but the one I seem to recollect best occurred nearly twenty years before I was born." This is the virgin imagination of the child which enables the young

to actualise the simple stories told them by their mothers.

So strong a hold did his mother's stories take on his nascent mind that the lives of the "Auld Lichts," who fought their quiet battles and sank into their humble graves before he was born, were, in a sense, more real to Barrie the boy, and far more interesting, than the lives of his contemporaries. That is why, as he tells us himself, his books deal mainly with the past instead of with the time in which he lives.

How lovingly he remembers his boyhood, and how highly he exalts it above all other periods of life, we may gather from such a notable passage as this, which occurs in "Margaret Ogilvy": "She [his mother] told me everything, and so my memories of the little red town are coloured by her memories. I knew it as it had been for generations, and suddenly I saw it change, and the transformation could not fail to strike a boy, for these first years are the most impressionable (nothing that happens after we are twelve matters very much); they are also the most vivid when we look back, and more vivid the further we have to look, until, at the end, what lies between bends like a hoop, and the extremes meet."

Here is another passage which illustrates his ever-green sympathy with boyhood: "The horror of my boyhood was that I knew a time would come when I also must give up the games, and how it was to be done I saw not (this agony still returns to me in dreams, when I catch myself playing marbles, and look on with cold displeasure). I felt that I must

continue playing in secret, and I took this shadow to her, when she told me her own experience, which convinced us both that we were very like each other inside."

I have seen it stated in a sedate and usually well-informed literary organ that "Sentimental Tommy" is a study of R. L. Stevenson; Mr A. T. Quiller Couch has actually expressed the opinion that the original in Barrie's mind was—Robert Burns! Both ideas are too absurd to be entertained for one moment. Tommy is obviously a study of the artistic temperament, and if there ever lived a real Tommy—and most of us have known at one time or another just such a "queer little deevil"—he was surely none other than J. M. Barrie.

Tommy Sandys became famous, as we now know, through writing a book which was entirely in keeping with his dominating characteristic—the power of vicarious suffering and feeling. He was not married, he was a perfect "sumph" in the presence of a woman, when he made a great reputation with his "Letters to a Young Man about to be Married." This was precisely in line with one of Barrie's pranks when a boy living with his brother at Dumfries. He is said to have written letters to the local papers signed "Paterfamilias," urging the desirability of schoolboys having longer holidays!

But we have only to turn again to the memoir of his mother for the keynote of Tommy's character. Writing of his boyish companionship with his mother, he says: "We read many books together when I

was a boy. 'Robinson Crusoe' being the first (and the second), and the 'Arabian Nights' should have been the next, for we got it out of the library (a penny for three days); but on discovering that they were Nights when we had paid for Knights, we sent that volume packing, and I have curled my lips at it ever since. 'The Pilgrim's Progress' we had in the house (it was as common a possession as a dresser-head), and so enamoured of it was I that I turned our garden into Sloughs of Despond, with pea-sticks to represent Christian on his travels, and a buffet-stool for his burden; but when I dragged my mother out to see my handiwork she was scared, and I felt for days, with a certain elation, that I had been a dark character. Besides reading every book we could hire or borrow, I also bought one now and again, and while buying (it was the occupation of weeks) I read, standing at the counter, most of the other books in the shop, which is perhaps the most exquisite way of reading."

The stories which he read with fascination in a certain periodical of that time suggested to him an idea that was to help his mother in her task of making a clouty (rag) rug. "The notion was nothing short of this," he tells us, "why should I not write the tales myself? I did write them—in the garret—but they by no means helped her to get on with her work, for when I finished a chapter I bounded downstairs to read it to her, and so short were the chapters, so ready was the pen, that I was back with a new manuscript before another clout had

been added to the rug. Authorship seemed, like her bannock-baking, to consist of running between two points. They were all tales of adventure (happiest is he who writes of adventure), no characters were allowed within if I knew their like in the flesh, the scene lay in unknown parts—desert islands, enchanted gardens, with Knights (none of your Nights) on black chargers, and round the first corner a lady selling water-cress.”

If such passages as these were put into the third person, and the circumstances slightly altered, they might be taken into “Sentimental Tommy,” where they would stand essentially characteristic.

Mr Barrie does not merely retain the memories of his own boyhood clear and unsullied; he displays an insight into the mind of the boy which, to my thinking, is only equalled amongst contemporary writers by the late Professor Henry Drummond’s knowledge of “the human boy.” In his earliest writings this is to be noticed, and it was inevitable that some day a book of his should be consecrated to boyhood. Mr Quiller Couch confesses that “Meade *Primus* to his Proud Parent,” an unsigned Barrie article in the *St James’s Gazette* sometime in the winter of 1887-88, was “my introduction to the most romantic of all my literary loves”; and I fancy all who love boys will declare that Chapter xx. of “My Lady Nicotine,” entitled “*Primus* to His Uncle,” is their favourite in that book. It is practically a re-cast of the article which first fascinated “Q,” and is the most accurate interpreta-

tion of a boy's thoughts that I have ever read. Some people think it is a pity that Mr Barrie has never carried out his intention to reprint some of those delightful "Views of a Schoolboy" which lie buried in the pages of the *St James's*.

As an example of his wonderful insight into boy's character a passage from "Sentimental Tommy" may be here "put in." It is that describing the sensation which Tommy experienced on venturing into the presence of Reddy's papa—why was Barrie so cruel as to create Reddy and let us just know sufficient of her to begin to love her, when he snatched her away for ever? Here is the extract to which I refer :—

"You think that Tommy is to be worsted at last, but don't be too sure; you just wait and see. Mama and Reddy (who was chuckling rather heartlessly) first took him into a room prettier even than the one he had lived in long ago (but there was no bed in it), and then, because some one they were in search of was not there, into another room without a bed (where on earth did they sleep?) whose walls were lined with books. Never having seen rows of books before except on sale in the streets, Tommy at once looked about him for the barrow. The table was strewn with sheets of paper of the size they roll a quarter of butter in, and it was an amazing thick table, a solid square of wood, save for a narrow lane down the centre for the man to put his legs in—if he had legs—which unfortunately there was reason to doubt. He was a formidable

man, whose beard licked the table while he wrote, and he wore something like a brown blanket, with a rope tied round it at the middle. Even more uncanny than himself were three busts on a shelf, which Tommy took to be deaders, and he feared the blanket might blow open and show that the man also ended at the waist. But he did not, for presently he turned round to see who had come in (the seat of his chair turning with him in the most startling way), and then Tommy was relieved to notice two big feet far away at the end of him. . . . Ever afterwards he remembered papa as the man that was not sure whether he had a shilling until he felt his pockets—a new kind of mortal to Tommy, who grabbed the shilling when it was offered to him, and then looked at Reddy imploringly—he was so afraid she would tell. But she behaved splendidly, and never even shook her head at him. After this, as hardly need be told, his one desire was to get out of the house with his shilling before they discovered their mistake.”

Is not this precisely as a boy of Tommy's temperament—as any boy indeed—would have felt under the circumstances? We can all recognise such masterly interpretations of character as true to life, but the trick of putting them on paper is that in which most of us miserably fail.

Another vivid sidelight which Barrie throws on the boy nature is his description of the manner in which Tommy heard of Reddy's death when he paid his last visit to the man who found unknown shillings

in his pocket: "When Tommy knew that Reddy was a deader he cried bitterly, and the man said, very gently—'I am glad you were so fond of her.'

" "'Tain't that,' Tommy answered with a knuckle in his eye, 'tain't that as makes me cry.' He looked down at his trousers, and, in a fresh outburst of childish grief, he wailed—'It's them.'

" Papa did not understand, but the boy explained—'She can't not never see them now,' he sobbed, 'and I wants her to see them, and they has pockets.'

" It had come to the man unexpectedly. He put Tommy down almost roughly, and raised his hand to his head, as if he felt a sudden pain there.

" But Tommy, you know, was only a little boy."

And what a happy description of boyhood's exciting delusions is this, descriptive of the gang of which Tommy was a rather precarious member: "It was a point of honour with all the boys he knew to pretend that the policeman was after them. To gull the policeman into thinking all was well they blackened their faces and wore their jackets inside out. Their occupation was a constant state of readiness to fly from him, and when he tramped out of sight, unconscious of their existence, they emerged from dark places and spoke in exultant whispers."

One more instance may be quoted in this connection—a very subtle touch indeed. It is Micah Dow's proposed sacrifice for Gavin Dishart's sake—or, rather, for his own father's sake—when he urges Babbie to go away and leave the Minister: "'I'll gi'e you my rabbit,' Micah said, 'if you'll gang awa'.

I've juist ane.' She shook her head, and, misunderstanding her, he cried, with his knuckles in his eyes — 'I'll gi'e you them baith, though I'm mighty sweer to part wi' Spotty.'"

One might go on at any length illustrating with the author's own words Barrie's keen sympathy with boys and his intimate knowledge of their character : but perhaps enough has been said to show that this love of boys is one of his most noteworthy qualities.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

IT is the good fortune of the writer who has Mr Barrie for his subject that the personality of the man is almost as interesting as his books. In the author of "A Window in Thrums" we have one of those rarer mortals whom world-wide fame has left unspoil. To win fame while one is yet a young man is a crucial test of character, and it is eloquent testimony to the sterling qualities of Barrie the man that he is still the modest, unassuming, "cannie" Scot who came to London fifteen years ago to conquer the world with his magic pen.

In an age when life was more sluggish than it is to-day literary reputations were of more gradual growth, and probably, when the struggle was not so keen minds were less alert and ripened more slowly. Whatever may have been, nowadays the period of literary puberty is on the sunny side of forty. All the chances are against a writer who has not made his mark before that age ever succeeding in doing so. True, cases might be mentioned to which this rule does not apply, but it will be readily granted, I think, that these are the exceptions. Still for an author to be able at forty to look back on a decade, during which he has been one of the greatest literary

forces of the time, is a remarkable achievement even in these days of quickly earned fame.

One of the evils of the modern fever for "discovering" new authors is the strong temptation to make his hay while the sun shines which it presents to the young writer suddenly acclaimed. It would almost seem that every gentleman who fills the *rôle* of critic to any paper of standing has made up his mind that the next best thing to being a great author himself is to play the prophet to some unknown scribbler in whom he has discerned the germ of genius. As a result, one is appalled to think how many geniuses are so proclaimed each year. It would be no difficult matter to name twenty or thirty men and women who have been ranked one morning with Thackeray, Dickens, or even Sir Walter Scott; pestered the next with demands from publishers for their new books, which, reviewed a few months later, are dismissed as "not justifying the high expectations held out by the author's first work," and then the genius retires to the chill obscurity from which, to fill a critic's yawning columns, he or she has been ruthlessly dragged forth. It is the brutal commercialism of the publishing business that is to blame, as much as the injudicious and perfervid critic. The reason why so many second books fall short of the promise which the first one bears is simply because the newly-found author, anxious to get as much money as he can when his little "boom" is booming, falls back on some of his juvenile trash which has escaped

the flames, and it is quickly bought at a high price by some speculative publisher who, a few months ago, wouldn't have wasted his precious time looking at any of the same writer's "stuff."

There is one Scottish author who, to my mind at least, has thus made himself a bond slave of the publisher, and for the sake of the glittering reward of the moment has willingly endangered his chance of a permanent reputation. I know of no case where a man of letters, a man of splendid parts, has more clearly sold himself into Egypt than the one I have in my mind. Now it is just here that one can't help admiring J. M. Barrie—even those who think his reputation exaggerated cannot but confess the man an artist to his finger tips. The only book of his representing early work which he put on the literary market after having made a very distinct advance up the ladder of fame was "My Lady Nicotine," and this was so largely rewritten that it practically became a new work. Even so, it is doubtful if it would ever have appeared but for the fact that unscrupulous scribblers had laid claim to the chapters of which it consisted while the bones of these were still buried in the pages of the *St James's Gazette*. If Barrie had the slightest commercialism in his nature, he could at the cost of a few evenings' work place on the market at least three more books composed of newspaper reprints whose sales would bring him in thousands of pounds. But he is too much of an artist to succumb to this vulgar temptation. I have heard it said he must be a lazy beggar to let years

pass without producing a new book ; but I prefer to think my view of his character is correct. He has shown from the very outset of his surprising career that his single aim as an author is to do the best that is in him, to be known and judged by his worthiest work. This ought to be the ambition of every true artist.

Of all the personal traits of J. M. Barrie there is none I would place higher than the modesty of the man. In his character we can see some of the very finest features of the Scot. Few are the men who, having risen by sheer strength of genius and industry to the very highest pinnacle of literary fame, would glory as Barrie glories in recalling and describing his early days of comparative poverty.

Of all contemporary authors he is the least self-conscious in his writings, and yet in his own life one cannot but think that the reverse is the case. For he is the very personification of shyness and reserve. Those who may consider this retiring disposition is not altogether lacking in affectation can scarcely be familiar with true Scottish character. I am persuaded there is not an atom of affectation in the man ; there is no contemporary of his so free from that affliction which often waits upon success and is vulgarly called "swelled head."

A story is told of him which gives an index to his character. In the early days of his fame as a humorist, a certain countess sent for him in the expectation that he would enliven her party with his wit. But, hating to be either lionised or used as an

instrument of drawing-room amusement, he went with a plan of action already determined upon. He drove to the castle on the box seat and put the footman inside the carriage. Silently he dined with the great ones present, and in the drawing-room he slunk into a corner where he twirled his thumbs in silence. It takes some courage and strength of will to enter such a mute protest against the vanities of aristocratic dinner-parties, and whether the anecdote be true or false it is quite consonant with the dour independence which bulks so largely in his character.

Another story illustrating this side of his character refers to one of those banquets with which literary London is so fond of entertaining the men who conquer it. Six or seven years ago he was the guest of a literary coterie, and had to meekly endure the ordeal of listening to the usual fulsome eulogies of his work which mark such occasions. The chairman, in the course of his speech, proposing the health of the guest, suggested that Mr Barrie might tell them how to pronounce the title of his first Thrums book, that being a matter of some difficulty to the English tongue. The rising of the guest was the signal for a storm of cheers, and when his perfervid entertainers had cooled down, the hero of the evening quietly said: "Mr Chairman, it's 'Auld Licht,'" and then resumed his seat. I do not doubt that some people will regard this behaviour as savouring of boorishness, but those who understand the man will put it down to that far rarer quality—a dislike to being fussed about. It is essentially a Scots characteristic.

He touches on the subject himself in "Margaret Ogilvy," where we find him writing: "You only know the shell of a Scot until you have entered his home circle; in his office, in clubs, at social gatherings, where you and he seem to be getting on so well, he is really a house with all the shutters closed and the door locked. He is not opaque of set purpose, often it is against his will—it is certainly against mine; I try to keep my shutters open and my foot in the door, but they will bang to. In many ways my mother was as reticent as myself, though her manners were as gracious as mine were rough (in vain, alas! all the honest oiling of them), and my sister was the most reserved of us all; you might at times see a light through one of my chinks; she was double-shuttered."

By the way, the simile of the light through a chink is one of the occasional indications that Barrie has read his Dean Ramsay. The Rev. Walter Dunlop, an old South country divine, once asked a local wag, who had been to Dumfries to hear a lecture by the celebrated Edward Irving, "Weel, Willie, man, an' what dae ye think o' Mr Irving?" "Oh, the man's crack't," said Willie. To which the old minister quickly replied, "Willie, ye'll aften see a licht peepin' through a crack."

As one writer has very happily observed, Barrie has really found the ideal way of safeguarding himself from ridicule or intrusion; he has frankly ridiculed himself. With qualities of imagination precisely the same as those with which he has

endowed that droll creation Tommy Sandys, he has assumed various characters in a way so realistic that the man has positively been influenced in some degree by the elements of the character assumed. Thus anyone who reads "My Lady Nicotine" would quite suppose that its author was an inveterate devotee of the weed; nay, so instinct is the book with the love of smoking that we might easily persuade ourselves that none but an old smoker could have written it. Yet, listen to what its author says on that point: "When I began to write this book I was no smoker. Instead of having given up the practice most reluctantly as described in these untruthful papers, I was smoking my first pipe gingerly, not because I liked it, but because all my friends smoked, and it seemed unsociable not to smoke with them. I had no pleasure in smoking, my highest ambition was to be able to smoke now and again without apparent effort. How I drifted into writing a book on the subject I cannot remember, but the desire to know both sides was doubtless the reason why I wrote as a slave to tobacco. Oddly enough this assumed character obtained an influence over me. I read his views with attention, and began to see that there must be something in them. By the time he had clearly demonstrated the folly of smoking I was a convert to the practice."

Is not the above quite in line with Tommy Sandys' writing his "Letters to a Young Man About to Marry" when he was still a gawky youth?

Barrie has laughed so heartily at himself and joked so frankly at his own expense that he has left his enemies—if any such there be—quite without slings or arrows. In the now defunct *National Observer*, during the heyday of Mr Henley's editorship, there once appeared an article in which Mr Barrie was mercilessly, but still humorously, chaffed for a speech which he had ventured to make at a Burns Club dinner. Many of his admirers were indignant, and one indiscreet fellow, hailing from Sheffield, threatened to horsewhip the editor. Fortunately Mr Henley was rescued from this indignity by Mr Barrie's timely confession to the authorship of the objectionable article.

Asked to contribute an account of his life to a volume of "living celebrities" he began a mock biography thus: "On arrival in London it was Mr Barrie's first object to make a collection of choice cigars. Though the author of 'My Lady Nicotine' does not himself smoke, his grocer's message boy does. Mr Barrie's pet animal is the whale. He feeds it on ripe chestnuts." Could a happier plan of protest against the prevalent vice of self-advertisement be imagined?

Another story, which illustrates a pleasant trait of his character, may be given in the words of a Glasgow journalist: "The landlady of the undergraduate shares with the conventional mother-in-law the not quite pleasant distinction of being the butt of traditional aspersion. But the aspersion is not always deserved in the case of either; and a story which

reaches us from a private source shows that Mr J. M. Barrie had the good luck to meet in his undergraduate days with a very meritorious specimen of her class. This landlady, according to the story, was so much respected and beloved by those students under her care that after her death one of them wrote to Mr Barrie suggesting that a memorial be placed over her grave. He received a letter enclosing a cheque for £15, and warmly praising the old lady. Mr Barrie's interest did not stop here; he inquired if anyone was looking after her cat, as the last time he had seen her the thought that she might pass away first had troubled her not a little. This is worthy of the author of 'A Window in Thrums.'"

Despite his amazingly brief speech on the occasion already referred to, Mr Barrie is no trembling tyro when he considers the occasion a suitable one for him to appear as a speaker, and several very successful public appearances stand to his credit; notably when he spoke at the Edinburgh meeting in support of the Stevenson Memorial. Then, although Lord Rosebery, one of the most accomplished orators of the day, was among the speakers, J. M. Barrie's modest effort was considered the success of the meeting. Indeed, when occasion serves, as his intimate friends will tell you, he is a most engaging talker, his speech being almost as brilliant as his writings. Nor is he troubled with nervousness; "as a matter of fact," says a friend, "he has the nerve and coolness of a successful barrister."

If ever novelist possessed the "artistic tempera-

ment," J. M. Barrie does. Thomas Sandys is, first and last, a study of the artistic temperament, and as such I am persuaded he is a study of Barrie's inner self. The strange faculty is admirably described by Talma, the great tragedian, who said: "I have suffered cruel losses, and have often been assailed with profound sorrows; but after the first moment, when grief vents itself in cries and tears, I have found myself involuntarily turning my gaze inwards (*Je faisais un retour sur mes souffrances*), and found the actor was unconsciously studying the man, and catching nature in the act." It is this condition of mind which enables its possessor to enter vicariously into the feelings and emotions of others, and when conjoined with exceptional imagination it can do more, it can conjure up emotions which *ought* to be exercised even in circumstances where they are lying dormant; as, for instance, Tommy's arrangement with his schoolmate, Lewis Doig, to relieve the latter of the irksome task of mourning for his lately deceased father.

"It is my contemptible weakness," Barrie himself confesses, "that if I say a character smiled vacuously, I must smile vacuously; if he frowns or leers, I frown or leer; if he is a coward or given to contortions, I cringe, or twist my legs until I have to stop writing to undo the knot. I bow with him, eat with him, and gnaw my moustache with him. If the character be a lady with an exquisite laugh, I suddenly terrify you by laughing exquisitely. One reads of the astounding versatility of an actor who is stout and lean

on the same evening, but what is he to the novelist, who is a dozen persons within an hour? Morally, I fear, we must deteriorate—but this is a subject I may wisely edge away from.”

It is just possible that some horribly learned people may be able from this confession to elaborate a thesis of Barrie’s failings of character, on the ground that, as a great actor should never lose his own individuality in that of the imaginary person he is portraying, so the truly great writer should never give way to such “contemptible weakness” as mimicking in very act the creatures of his fancy; but it is precisely out of this capacity for self-subordination that sympathetic authors are made, and the novelist who cannot awaken our sympathy for his fictitious folk is certain to be numbered with the great unread.

Barrie refers on various occasions to the power exerted over him by his fictional characters once he has started these on the road that leads to some destination of which he may not know. Of Rob Angus he says: “I expect that when I started Rob Angus I meant him to have a less strenuous time, but he fell in love, and once they fall in love there is no saying what your heroes will do.” Again, he observes: “There are writers who can plan out their story beforehand as clearly as though it were a railway journey, and adhere throughout to their original design—they draw up what playwrights call a scenario—but I was never one of those. I spend a great deal of time indeed in looking for the best road in the map and mark it with red ink, but at the first bypath

off my characters go. 'Come back,' I cry, 'you are off the road.' 'We prefer this way,' they reply. I try bullying. 'You are only people in a book,' I shout, 'and it is my book.' But they seldom come, and it ends with my plodding after them. Unless I am the one to yield, they and I do not become friends, which is fatal to the book."

Here again we see the spirit of the true artist who, despising the mechanism of the story-teller, relies on no traditions of his craft for guidance, but goes direct to Nature: "When the English publishers read 'A Window in Thrums' in manuscript, they thought it unbearably sad, and begged me to alter the end. They warned me that the public do not like sad books. Well, the older I grow and the sadder the things I see, the more do I wish my books to be bright and hopeful; but an author may not always interfere with his story, and if I had altered the end of 'A Window in Thrums,' I think I should never have had any more respect for myself. It is a sadder book to me than it can ever be to anyone else. I see Jess at her window looking for the son who never came back as no other can see her, and I knew that unless I brought him back in time the book would be a pain to me all my days, but the thing had to be done."

Nothing has been said, thus far, about the personal appearance of the man, and as this chapter concerns his personal qualities, this little note from an article by Sir George Douglas may be appropriately introduced here. It is slight, but sufficient: "To the

bodily eye, as he appears in London drawing-rooms and at London dinner-tables, Mr Barrie has little, nothing, of the typical Scot. The high pale brow, the dark hair and eye, the chiselled refinement of the profile, suggest Italy rather than the North. To me the face bears a certain resemblance to portraits of Edgar Allan Poe. The expression is shy, absorbed. There is as little trace of affectation in the manner as in the writing. It is only in a touch of *brusquerie* in the address that the Northerner is revealed."

Yet, in every attribute of character—his fervent religious feeling, his unquenchable love of home and country, his genuine modesty, his sympathy with the poor and lowly—in all these he is a typical Scot. Professor G. A. Smith, in his beautiful "Life of Henry Drummond," justly remarks that the author of "Natural Law," as a man, was greater than his books; but of Barrie I do not think this can be said. Indeed, if it be not a paradox, Barrie, the man—with all his conspicuous qualities—is rather less than his books—his greatest books, I mean.

THE STORY OF
“THE AULD LIGHTS”

THE STORY OF "THE AULD LIGHTS"

THANKS to the genius of Mr Barrie, the "Auld Lights" are known to the English reading public throughout the world. But it has been not altogether unjustly observed that Mr Barrie's is a somewhat one-sided picture of this sect—a picture in which their little angularities and, to some eyes, their less worthy features are exhibited more fully than the great qualities which they undoubtedly possess. We may be sure, however, that it was no lack of sympathy for them that led Mr Barrie to paint his partial pictures of their lives, but rather the artist's sense which guided him in his selection of just those characteristics that were likeliest to interest the reader in his subjects. Thus, while we may dismiss any suggestion of unreality in his portraits of an "Auld Licht" community, we cannot pretend that they are more than half-lengths. In any case, there is a large number of readers of Mr Barrie's books who, though quite familiar with the term "Auld Licht," have but a mere inkling of the long story that lies behind it, and to these some slight sketch of the religious struggles in which the Old Lights have engaged is likely to be of interest.

There is a story which, while obviously untrue, touches in a very happy way one of the principal

features of the Scottish people. A certain Scotsman on his death-bed was ill at ease, and one of his friends watching by him suggested that they might send for a minister to pray, or that a hymn might be sung, whereupon the dying Scot exclaimed, "A'm wanting neither hymns nor prayers, I want to argy." The Scots are truly a race of arguers, and this propensity for disputation is especially marked in their religious affairs; for in no country in the world has a race of people, agreed almost to a man on the great essentials of religion, been so broken up into sects over minor questions, and often over questions of purely academic import. The whole story of religion in Scotland is full of quarrellings and bickerings, and yet withal the story of Presbyterianism is one of the finest in the annals of Christianity.

To properly appreciate the position held by the Auld Lights it is necessary for us to retell a part of that story. The years which intervened between the signing of the first Covenant in 1580 and the coming of the Prince of Orange in 1688, followed by the crowning of William and Mary in 1689, "the first year of a freed Israel," were the years that made Scotland what it is. These days of the Covenanters did for Scotland what the days of the Puritans did for England. When the Assembly of the Scottish Kirk met in 1690, after having been prohibited for thirty years, there were only sixty members who could legitimately claim to be old Presbyterians, and the rest were, for the most part,

poor, unprincipled clericals, who had been placed in their charges by the prelatic bishops. It was morally certain, therefore, that those sixty good men and true would have a poor time at the hands of the hundreds of bishops' creatures who now readily turned Presbyterians to save their livings. But the first signs of a rupture are not noticed until 1717, when Professor Simson was accused of heresy by the orthodox members of the Assembly, but by the inert majority was permitted to go on teaching. Then came the publication of that famous work which sounds the first note of secession, "The Marrow of Modern Divinity."¹ This book, which was speedily condemned by the Assembly, caused a great controversy, and the ministers who endorsed its theology were solemnly "rebuked" by the Assembly. Chief amongst them were Boston of Ettrick and Henry Erskine of Chirnside, who, in a sense, were the real secession fathers, although they were not spared to take part in the actual secession.

Some idea of the abominable conditions created by the prelatic Presbyterians, who maintained a great majority in the Assembly, is gathered from the fact that at this time, in placing new ministers in charges to which they had not been called by

¹ The story of this book is of singular interest. Written by an English Puritan, a copy of it, which one of Cromwell's soldiers had taken with him to Scotland, came into the hands of Mr Boston of Ettrick, who was so struck with its teaching that he had it reprinted and circulated. It thus came about that one of the strongest factors in the creation of Scottish Dissent was supplied by Puritan England.

the people, and where the parishioners objected to their coming, it was frequently necessary to send a force of soldiers to assist at the solemn ceremony of Induction. A permanent committee of the Assembly, commonly known as the Riding Committee, actually existed for no other purpose than to assist at the induction of unpopular ministers who were being forced upon unwilling congregations by the Synod (the Church Court next in importance to the Assembly). For often it happened that the local Presbytery was in sympathy with the parish. But this very travesty of Christianity was playing an invaluable part in Scottish history, bracing the Sons of the Covenant more strongly than ever to that simple noble faith for which their fathers had fought and died, and for which many of the older generation then existing had also suffered. Denied the slightest voice in the conduct of their church affairs, forced to accept ministers of no character, or worse, the people throughout the length and breadth of Scotland — excepting always some parts of the remoter Highlands — were rebelling against this religious tyranny, which in the guise of Presbyterianism, was nothing but prelacy continued. The faithful remnant of the Assembly gathered great congregations around them, since, rather than “sit under” men whom they could not respect, the sturdy country folk of those days would walk twenty miles to church, and twenty back again to hear a minister who was “sound,” and at communion times a journey of forty miles each way was not

considered too much to undertake. Boston would have 800 to communion at Ettrick, while as many as 2000 would travel great distances to take the Sacrament at Erskine's little church at Portmoak, Kinross-shire. These ceremonies resembled nothing so much as the Boers' *Nachtmaal* of the present day; the services often continued for two or three days.

Although on the 16th November 1733, the Commission of the Assembly "expelled" Ebenezer Erskine, then minister of Stirling, William Wilson of Perth, Alexander Moncrieff of Abernethy, and James Fisher of Kinclaven, for their persistent objection to patronage, and their firm stand for Christian liberty, it was not until 1740 that these four ministers were formally ejected from the Established Church, and from this latter year the real history of Scottish Dissent begins. But on the 6th of December 1733 the four ministers had formed themselves into "The Associate Presbytery," and in 1739 they were joined by four others, so that in 1740 the Associate Presbytery consisted of eight congregations, and many a hard battle now ensued between the Assembly and the dissenting ministers, whom the former sought to turn out of manse and church; as, indeed, in most cases they succeeded in doing.

Meanwhile other agencies were at work for the promotion of dissent from the Established Church. A very small sect, known as the Cameronians or MacMillanites, who followed John MacMillan, a

disciple of the founder of that body in Covenanting days, was already in existence; but, while sympathising with the seceders, the Cameronians discovered they could not join their Presbytery, and in 1743 they created the first "Reformed Presbytery," which was joined by Thomas Nairn, a minister who had seceded with the second four to the Associate Presbytery in 1739. The historic Porteous Riots had also taken place, and exercised an important influence on the Established Church. A Captain Porteous, who had fired with fatal effect on a mob that attempted to rescue a smuggler condemned to death, was forcibly taken from Edinburgh gaol, and publicly hanged by another mob when the populace had reason to believe that the Government had no intention of punishing him severely for his offence. A reward of £200 was offered for information which would lead to the conviction of the ring-leaders, and every minister in Scotland was ordered by Government to read from his pulpit once a month the official proclamation. The majority of them blithely enough carried out this instruction, but a large minority saw that they were being made mere Government officials, that the civil authority was raising itself above the spiritual head of the Church, and the cause of Dissent was thus further assisted by its enemies.

Already there were in existence a large number of "praying societies," which consisted of godly men and women who could find no spiritual food amongst the husks and tares which the Established

Church had to offer them, and these societies looked to the Associate Synod, as the seceders were now called, for assistance, many of them becoming the nuclei of secession churches; so that in March 1745 there were no fewer than twenty-six placed secession ministers, and seventeen vacant congregations, Presbyteries having been formed for Glasgow, Dunfermline, and Edinburgh.

But this very year was fated to see a cleavage amongst the seceders themselves, and on a subject so small that in these broad-minded days it is difficult to conceive earnest men condescending to quarrel about it; yet so strongly opinioned were these secession fathers, and so dear to them were their convictions on even the smallest religious questions, that they never hesitated at a rupture when they felt their conscience dictated it. What was known as the Burgess Oath Controversy arose from the fact that at that time burgesses in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Perth were called upon to sign the following declaration: "Here I protest before God and your Lordships that I profess, and allow with my heart, the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof; I shall abide thereat, and defend the same to my life's end, renouncing the Roman religion called papistry." Some of the seceders saw in this a subtle attempt to make all burgesses acknowledge the Church as by law established, but others did not take this view of the oath, and could not regard a burgess who signed it as being unfitted

for their communion. So the Associate Synod split into two sections (1747), the one calling itself the General Associate Synod, and the other the Associate Synod, but they were popularly known as Anti-burghers and Burghers respectively ; and for no less than seventy-three years this small matter kept them apart. Indeed, so strong was the feeling between the two secession bodies that in many instances a husband might be a Burgher and his wife an Anti-burgher, and they would spend their religious lives apart. The session records of the period abound in the most extraordinary charges against members of the one body countenancing the work of the other. In the meantime the Established Church was steadily going from bad to worse in the matter of patronage, and on the 22nd October 1761, another fragment broke away from the Assembly, calling itself the Relief Church, the first Relief Presbytery being formed by Mr Gillespie, Mr Thomas Boston, of Jedburgh (son of the great Boston), and Mr Collier.

Yet, while we find those early seceders engaged in what must appear to us as very paltry squabbling on questions which in no wise affected the great principles of Christianity, nothing would be further from the mark than to suppose that these dissensions in the least degree interfered with their religious activity. It is in the Scottish nature never to be more earnest nor active than when some dispute is going on. Rather than paralysing their work this cleavage seemed to give the seceders renewed

impetus, and with a spirit from which sectarian rivalry may not have been absent, both bodies took part in missionary effort, which, as yet, had scarcely been dreamed of by the effete Assembly. In 1753 the first Presbyterian missionary was sent out to Pennsylvania by the Anti-burghers, and the Burghers soon followed suit. To them is due entirely the establishment in America of the Presbyterian Church, which, as all are aware, is to-day one of the greatest religious bodies in the United States and Canada. It is even believed that the Constitution of the United States was drafted by one of the early Presbyterian divines, Witherspoon, whose portrait hangs in the Senate at this day. Bancroft, the American historian, admits that the United States Constitution is Presbyterianism applied to national government. The collections which were made from time to time by the seceders for mission work, not only in America, but in England, Ireland, and the Highlands, were out of all proportion to the means of the people, who gave to such purposes in a way that few churches of the present day will give. When we set against their internal dissensions the evidence of this missionary zeal, we can see that they were as great in great things as they were small in small things.

Their capacity for quarrelling was truly extraordinary, and in 1799 another question was fated to effect another cleavage. This time the difference of opinion arose from the desire of some to make the "Solemn League and Covenant" a term of com-

munion, together with a trumpety quarrel about magistrates' powers in churches. The result was that Burghers and Anti-burghers alike split up each into two sections; those who objected to the Covenant being made a term of communion seceding, and being called in the one case "Auld Licht Anti-burghers," and in the other "Auld Licht Burghers." Thus instead of two bodies there were now four, to say nothing of the Relief Church, which was working away quietly and managing to avoid breakage.

An English gentleman, on a visit to Edinburgh at this time, happened to ask his Scottish host for information as to the churches of the country, and on being given the story here briefly sketched, found himself so perplexed as to which was which and what was what, that he wittily observed, "Well, they are all Presbyterians, but as I can never hope to remember the different positions I will just call them the split peas."

Happily, although this Englishman's observation was witty and apropos, the seceders were not exactly like split peas after all; they were not incapable of being reunited, and we have practically arrived at the end of the story of their ruptures; for soon influences were at work to bring about re-union of the fragments, and on the 8th of September 1820 the United Associate Synod was formed by the re-union of the Burghers and the Anti-burghers. The united body, which represented a total of two hundred and sixty-two congregations, was better

known as the "United Secession Church," and in another twenty-seven years (on the 13th of May 1847, to be precise), the Relief Church also joined forces with them, thus establishing the United Presbyterian Church, which in the half-century that has elapsed since then has been foremost in all great movements for the promotion of Christ's kingdom on earth. But four years previous to the founding of the U.P. Church the great Disruption of 1843 had taken place, the Free Church of Scotland then coming into existence, and it is one of the happiest auguries for the future of religion in Scotland that in this closing year of the nineteenth century these two great Churches,¹ after long years of debate, have joined hands; so that Scottish Dissent is represented by one great powerful Church, which owes its remote origin to the Erskines and the other "Marrow Men," as the early seceders were called from their approval of "The Marrow of Modern Divinity."

But it is not in the nature of the Scottish people to be absolutely agreed on all points of any subject, they are too independent of mind and too sincere in their convictions as a race to be absolutely of one opinion on any given question, and above all on any religious question. Hence, while the great majority of dissenters joined forces in the way described, there were here and there a few who could not see eye to eye with the rest, and no power on earth would make

¹ In 1900 the membership of the U.P. Church had grown to close upon 200,000.

these few alter their opinions simply because the majority thought otherwise.

Thus it was that when in 1820 the Burghers and Anti-burghers reunited, the "Old Lights" in both bodies still held out, the Old Light Anti-burghers, whose most notable member was the celebrated Dr M'Crie, calling themselves the Constitutional Associate Presbytery, and the other the Synod of Original Burghers. In 1827 there were even a few Burgher and Anti-burgher ministers to be found who had protested against the union of 1820 and these worthies, having had ample time to consider the situation, attached themselves to Dr M'Crie's people, who now became known as the Synod of Original Seceders.

But when we arrive at the year 1842 we begin to realise the position of the churches more clearly, for now it was the lot of the two branches of "Old Lights" to effect a junction, and as it was scarcely conceivable that there could be amongst them the constituents of a new body (the "Original Old Lights" would have been too absurd), the union of these two sections, who now adopted the designation of United Original Seceders, practically meant that all the sternly orthodox, unbending, conservative thinkers had been gathered together in one camp.

The Original Seceders have not exactly flourished like a green bay tree during the latter half of the century, but despite the fact that a number of them went into the Free Church after 1843, they continue to this day a body of some importance and have

received accessions to their ranks, notably in 1847, when the older-fashioned thinkers of the Relief Church refused to take part in the union which created the U.P. body. There are now in existence four presbyteries of the Original Secession Church, as it is generally called to-day, these being the presbyteries of Aberdeen and Perth, Edinburgh, Ayr and Glasgow; Kirriemuir ("Thrums") being included in the presbytery of Aberdeen and Perth.

It will thus be seen that the "Old Lights" stand for all that is uncompromising in modern religion. They are the direct descendants of the men who by their action in 1733 took the first practical steps for securing to the Scottish people the right of Christian liberty. They are likewise the descendants of those who were at once the sturdiest champions of orthodox Christianity and the most narrow-minded members of the community in small domestic matters which lay altogether outside of religious duty. It follows then that the "Auld Lights" of to-day, while inheriting some of the more worthy characteristics, cannot have escaped the less desirable heritage; and even to-day, though the kirk-sessions can no longer go to the extremes of former times, every congregation of them is more or less prejudiced against such worldly innovations as the harmonium, the singing of hymns, and even the use of the paraphrase.

Time, however, has mellowed these prejudices a little, and the body is no longer so strait-laced as in the days of which Mr Barrie writes. On the whole its traditions, so far as its spiritual fathers are

concerned in the great principles for which they fearlessly took their stand, sacrificing generally their own personal interest in so doing, entitle the present day "Auld Licht" to regard his church with affection and some degree of pride.

As has been said, Barrie's description of the "Auld Lichts" is at best a partial one, but it would indeed be difficult to do full justice to the character of these people in anything short of an elaborate treatise which, while deeply interesting to the serious student of character, would most certainly fail to find much popularity amongst the mass of general readers. And when one starts to search the records of the "Auld Licht" sessions it is precisely on those entries which accord most with Barrie's character studies that one finds himself spending most time and marking for quotation; it is always the angularities of character that are primarily interesting. Take for instance Barrie's description of Tibbie M'Quhatty, who nearly split the "Auld Licht" church on the "run line." You will remember how she refused to remain in the church whilst a psalm was being sung according to Mr Dishart's new usage, which dispensed with the old practice of reading one line of the psalm and then allowing the congregation to sing that line, reading the next, and so on to the end. Tibbie, whenever Mr Dishart gave out a psalm, used to get up, leave the church, and wait outside until it was over.

This is no fancy picture of Mr Barrie's, for many similar cases can be given. One is worthy of mention.

Dr William Anderson of Glasgow, a celebrated Relief minister, preached in a country church one day, and did precisely as Mr Dishart did, greatly to the indignation of the congregation and the elders, who remonstrated with him afterwards for so daring an innovation. But in this church they were also strong on refusing to sing "repeating tunes"; that is to say, to sing the last line of a psalm *twice* was in their eyes a religious abomination. Knowing this, Dr Anderson said to them, "You wish the minister to read the psalm once and the precentor to go over every line twice, and you yourselves will not even sing the last line twice." This was a line of argument which had never presented itself before to these elders, but being, like all true Scots, logical to a fault, they at once saw its reason and the "run line" in that church became an institution. Elders indeed have solemnly arisen during the service and protested against both the run line and repeating tunes, so that Tibbie's conduct was not exceptional but typical.

They had a wonderful taste for sermons, those Auld Lichts, and even to-day they love a long stodgy discourse and a church where no such abomination as a "kist o' whustles," even in the shape of an innocent little harmonium, has been introduced. Barrie himself tells us that on Fast-days in Kirriemuir, in that earlier part of the century of which he writes, the service began on Saturday at two and lasted till nearly seven o'clock, during which time two sermons were preached with no interval between.

On Sunday the Sacrament was dispensed, and the service, which included a long series of specially long prayers, lasted from eleven in the morning till six; and at half-past six another two hours' service began either in the kirk or on the common, "from which no one who thought much about his immortal soul would have dared (or cared) to absent himself." Then on Monday came a four hours' service, which, like Saturday's, consisted of two services in one, but began at eleven instead of two. Such was an example of the Auld Lights' remarkable taste for sermons, but a Fast-day in Scotland has long since ceased to be a bout of worship and church-going, though in most of the older-fashioned kirks to-day services of some sort are still held.

Another peculiarity of the Auld Lights, and indeed of all Scottish Dissenters, was, and is to the present day for that matter, a distaste for "a paper minister," by which is meant a minister who reads his sermons. It will be remembered that Mr Dishart's great success when he preached his trial sermon at Thrums lay largely in the fact that, as he was about to begin, he handed down the big Bible to the precentor to give his arm freer swing. "The congregation, trembling with exhilaration, probed his meaning." They could not see a square inch of paper, and knew that, unlike others they had heard of and one they had seen, his action made it impossible for him to conceal within the leaves of the Bible the written pages of a sermon. A certain Mr Watt, whom they had once been on

the point of calling, had written his sermon on pages precisely the size of the pulpit Bible, but was undone when, preaching in the open air on the common, a gust of wind blew his sermon hither and thither to the sorrow and indignation of his hearers.

An old Scots story in this connection will show how much importance was attached to a minister's extempore speaking. Andrew Spiers, a certain well-known half-wit, on one occasion went to hear a minister at an Established Church, where almost invariably the discourse was read, Andrew himself being generally an attendant at a Dissenting place of worship. It so happened that the church was crowded, and Andrew had to take a seat on the pulpit steps, from which he found it difficult to see the minister, until he managed to shove his head through the railings. But this proceeding, though efficacious for a time, proved unfortunate for Andrew, as on coming to withdraw his head he found it held fast behind his ears. In struggling to free himself, he shouted out, to the amazement of the congregation: "It's a judgment, it's a judgment on me for leaving my ain kirk and coming to hear a paper minister!"

There was certainly very little gaiety entering into the lives of the Auld Lights, and their tastes would to-day, in some respects at least, be accounted rather morbid. A characteristic was their propensity for attending funerals, invitations to which, as Barrie tells us, "were as much sought after as cards to

my lady's dances in the South." Christenings, too, were great events in their lives, and it was considered positively indecent to allow a Sunday to pass after the birth of a child without its being carried to the church for baptism. You will remember how Sandy Whamond, the leading elder at Thrums, was ruined for life by the ambition of his wife to beat the record in this respect. She had a child born on the Saturday afternoon, and it was carried to the christening the next day, a fact which, with evidence that was forthcoming as to a light in Whamond's window after twelve o'clock on Saturday night, left the congregation with nothing but the horrible conclusion that some of the child's clothes had been prepared during the early hours of the Sabbath, and this, above all, was an offence that could not be passed over. So it came about that Mrs Whamond had to be liberally prayed for, and "Lang Tammas ruled in Sandy's stead."

Yet, in their religious exercises the Auld Lights were not altogether without some occasional flashes of shrewd common sense. There was the farmer of Little Rathie, for instance, of whom Tammas Haggart had a rare story to tell, a funeral always being an occasion for the surviving cronies of the dead man to exchange opinions about his life, and revive stories of his doings. Mr Dishart had on one occasion admonished Little Rathie for not attending a special service in the kirk to pray for rain during a period of drought, when two adjoining farmers had both attended. "Oh,"

said Little Rathie, "I thocht to mysel', thinks I, if they get rain for praying for't on Finny an' Lin-tool, we are bound to get the benefit o't on Little Rathie."

There is no denying that during the first part of this century, quite as much as during the latter part of the previous century, the Auld Lights were especially noted for narrow-mindedness, and it is simply astounding to read of the paltry offences for which the minister and his kirk-session considered it necessary to rebuke members of the congregation. "Promiscuous hearing" was a very common offence; that is to say a member of a Burgher church may have gone for one night to an Anti-burgher church and woe to him for so doing, as at the next meeting of the Kirk-session he was hauled before it and sternly rebuked for his misconduct. Or an Anti-burgher may have been so negligent of his religious principles as to pause for ten minutes behind a hedge alongside a field in which a Burgher service was proceeding, and if he happened to be observed by one of his own congregation he would have to "compear" before the Session, and be duly admonished for his sin. Actual cases of this can be given. For a member of any of the secession churches to be married in an Established church was a cardinal sin, and the rebuke for that at the hands of the Session was especially long and ponderous. Irregular attendance at church, the holding of "penny weddings," the borrowing of money on Sabbath, fighting, family squabbling—there was

absolutely nothing too small, nothing too miserably paltry for the minister and the Kirk-session to consider, and if necessary to "rebuke."

The records of an Old Light church (Dunnikier) at Kirkcaldy contain some remarkable examples of what the Session considered to be its duty and obligation towards members of the Church. In 1745 it boasted a member who had been sinful enough to allow himself to be united in the bonds of holy wedlock by a minister of the Established Church, "upon which condition his wife's master did promise to give him his marriage dinner." William Cran was the name of the offender, and William was duly hauled before the Session, who harangued him solemnly on the abomination he had committed, describing the action of his wife's master (she had presumably been a servant) as being done no doubt "with a design to ensnaring the said William Cran and that they might make a jest of the said William's profession." William seems to have been a bit of a wag, for we are gravely informed that he confessed to being sorry for such an irremediable step "and resolves through grace not to do the like in time coming." There is no mention of laughter in the record, which goes on at great length to express the opinion that William had only confessed and promised not to be married by an Established Church minister again, in view of the fact that he was now desiring "church privileges"—probably the baptism of a child. But for his sin we learn that William was suspended "from

sealing ordinances till he discover a more thorough sense of his folly."

Another very humorous entry in the records of this same church refers to a baptism in an Established kirk, and the serious offence connected therewith which a member of the secession body had committed. She was a woman who had promised to carry her brother's child for baptism to an Established church to which he belonged, and although warned by one of her own elders of the slippery path she was treading, she did actually carry the child to the church, and witness its baptism. For this, poor woman, she had to stand before her session, and her defence was most ingenious. That she had carried her brother's child into an Established church and witnessed its christening was most true, but true also was the fact that she had never intended to cross the threshold of that place of sin, and had it not been that the child was weakly, she would have handed it over at the church door to another woman. This she was afraid to do "lest it should die," and confessed that she had entered the church with the child, but further added that "she did not think to err at the time, she only having heard the prayer and been witness to the baptism of the child." She went on, however, to admit that the Moderator had laid open her sin by citation of the Holy Scripture, and she came to the Session "desirous to be humbled and resolving through grace to be more watchful in

time to come." In the end she was "rebuked," poor soul, and no doubt carried the memory of her terrible offence with her to the grave.

Another instance of the surprising activity of the Kirk-session at the end of last century, and typical also of its doings during the earlier part of the nineteenth century, is an entry which describes the "compearing" of a young woman who was questioned as to her keeping company with a certain young man on Sabbath days. The girl answered very simply that she had spoken to him occasionally, but the Session, which seems to have listened to every item of tittle-tattle that reached its ears, decided that the case was one for solemn advice and found "that Uphan Dryburgh had not been so much on her guard as she ought to have been considering the character of the said Thomas Davidson, though at the same time nothing scandalous could be proved upon her, wherefore they agreed that she should be exhorted by the Moderator to be more wary and circumspect in her behaviour in time coming, and especially on all occasions to shun the company of the said Thomas; she being called in, this was intimate to her and she exhorted accordingly."

One might go on at any length making such quotations from these old Session records most of which would be interesting, and all of which possess something humorous or pathetic, but it is no doubt a one-sided picture of the people which they present and a side that has possibly been sufficiently

dealt with already. It is true that this is the aspect of the Auld Lights to which Mr Barrie has devoted most of his attention, but it cannot be charged against him that he has been negligent of their great qualities, for these he has fittingly represented in several of his sketches, and more especially in the whole tenor of "The Little Minister." It happens, however, that the supreme merits of the Auld Lights are precisely the least picturesque and least valuable from the literary point of view, but the close student of Barrie's writings will observe that wherever he dwells upon some of their angularities, he always manages, in a word or two, to remind us of the things which ennobled them.

Take, for instance, the following passage from one of his earlier sketches descriptive of an "Auld Licht Community": "Scotland had not been long known to me before I reached the conclusion that the score of back-bent, poverty-laden natives of the smaller towns, whose last years are a struggle with the workhouse, almost invariably constitute an Auld Licht congregation, of which a very young man is the minister. The first minister ever placed in my Auld Licht Kirk accepted the call 'as from the mouth of hell.' According to rumour, the natives had a weakness for hot dinners on Sunday; indeed, the backsliding had gone so far that only a boy minister could have accomplished the work of regeneration. The little girl who accompanied him was his wife, and he proved himself a beardless hero, an Auld Licht General Gordon. Nothing in

the Auld Licht Kirk which I used to know so well affords more food for reflection than the fact that a handful of paupers contrived to make up a salary for a minister."

There is a wealth of suggestion in the last sentence. People who have convictions—no matter how absurd these may appear to others—if they are ready to make personal sacrifices to uphold these convictions, must command our respect. That the Auld Lights as a community deserve our respect no one will venture to gainsay. With all their curious little shortcomings they never fail to awaken our sympathy, and when we study the story of the Scottish churches through the last two centuries, we cannot but be deeply impressed with the sterling character, the burning zeal, the devotion to their principles, which has characterised the seceders from first to last.

THRUMS

“THRUMS”

As a rule there is no pleasanter experience than a literary pilgrimage. To visit the scenes which George Eliot has described so truly in her books is a rare delight, so full of natural charm is her part of leafy Warwickshire; Shakespeare's country abounds in landscape beauty, the Avon breathed poetry long before the immortal Will dreamed by its banks; the country of Sir Walter Scott, even apart from his genius, is redolent of romance; so, too, those western wilds where Alan Brek and David Balfour roamed. A literary pilgrimage to such scenes as these is certain to be full of pleasure and profit.

But there are other places not less renowned for literary associations where the pilgrim will find nothing but disappointment and disenchantment. These are mainly where the character of the people, rather than their surroundings, has been the author's study and exposition. Such places are Drumtochty and Thrums. Neither is attractive for its own sake; both are commonplace to a degree that is almost painful, and the visitor to either is certain to come away disappointed.

Why so? The explanation is simple enough. Character is the salt, nay, the be-all and end-all

of Barrie's and "Ian Maclaren's" books; the environment of the people figuring in them is so faintly sketched that each reader for himself fills in the background and fills it in so prettily (as he thinks) that when he sees the real thing and finds how gray and drab he should have made it he is disenchanted—Thrums has lost its glamour in his eyes. It is the old, old story of the ideal being shattered when brought into contact with the real.

Only in a sense is Kirriemuir "Thrums." It gave to its most famous citizen the material wherewith to shape an ideal community of interesting folk, but to all appearance it still remained, as it ever was, a very sleepy, unprepossessing little township. Indeed, its concise description in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* is almost too flattering: "A borough of barony and a market town of Forfarshire, Scotland, beautifully situated on an eminence above the glen through which the Gairie flows. It lies about five miles north-west of Forfar, and about sixty-two miles north of Edinburgh. The special industry of the town is linen weaving, for which large power-loom factories have recently been built."

Barrie knows his native town as intimately as he knew his mother's face, its most ordinary features are to him steeped in romance, that best of all romance, the memories of imaginative boyhood. None of us can hope to see in its frowsy tenements and shabby closes the wonders that he sees there; few even of his townfolk can, for that would imply something of his imaginative gifts, and these are extremely rare.

It is true, we can see the window that gave the author the title of his first great book, we can visit the manse, we can even look into the Auld Licht Kirk, but how uninteresting all these appear to be when we cannot people them again with Jess and Leebie, with Margaret and Babbie, with Gavin Dishart and Lang Tammas. We can wander to the Den; but it is a tax on the imagination to recall the last Jacobite rising, to catch glimpses of the great Stroke, Corp of Corp, the proud Lady Grizel and Widow Elspeth. There is the Cuttle Well, and we remember with pity the Painted Lady; yet to the eye the scene is sadly lacking in romance. But what a place to dream about is that same Den, if we have never seen it and know it only in such a passage as this!—

“Through the Den runs a tiny burn, and by its side is a pink path, dyed this pretty colour, perhaps, by the blushes the ladies leave behind them. The burn as it passes the Cuttle Well, which stands higher and just out of sight, leaps in vain to see who is making that cooing noise, and the well, taking the spray for kisses, laughs all day at Romeo, who cannot get up. Well is a name it must have given itself, for it is only a spring in the bottom of a basinful of water, where it makes about as much stir in the world as a minnow jumping at a fly. They say that if a boy, by making a bowl of his hands, should suddenly carry off all the water, a quick girl could thread her needle at the spring. But it is a spring that will not wait a moment,

"Men who have been lads in Thrums sometimes go back to it from London, or from across the seas, to look again at some battered little house and feel the blasts of their bairnhood playing through the old wynds, and they may take with them a foreign wife. They show her everything, except the Cuttle Well; they often go there alone. The well is sacred to the memory of first love. You may walk from the well to the round cemetery in ten minutes. It is a common walk for those who go back.

"First love is but a boy and girl playing at the Cuttle Well with a bird's egg. They blow it on one summer evening in the long grass, and on the next it is borne away on a coarse laugh, or it breaks beneath the burden of a tear. And yet——. I once saw an aged woman, a widow of many years, cry softly at mention of the Cuttle Well. 'John was a good man to you,' I said, for John had been her husband. 'He was a leal man to me,' she answered with wistful eyes, 'ay, he was a leal man to me—but it wasna John I was thinking o'. You dinna ken what makes me greet so sair,' she added presently, and though I thought I knew now I was wrong. 'It's because I canna mind his name,' she said."

With such a fairy-like picture in the mind's eye it is little short of sacrilege to search out the real thing and compare facts with fancy. I should certainly advise no one to do so, and for myself I do not hesitate to say I have deliberately kept away from Kirriemuir, and from Logiealmond, even when a half-an-hour

would have taken me thither, lest I should lose some precious paintings from the picture gallery of my mind. What shall it profit an enthusiast if he finds Kirriemuir and loses Thrums ?

Barrie has thought so too, for when he is telling us that Jean Myles always spoke as if her window in London “still looked out on the bonny Marywell-brae,” he hastens to warn us that “it is not really bonny, it is gey an’ mean an’ bleak, and you must not come to see it. It is just a steep wind-swept street, old and wrinkled, like your mother’s face.”

He has many descriptions of Thrums in his books, but the following, which appeared in the first draft of “When a Man’s Single,” is one of the most elaborate :—

“Thrums is but a handful of houses jumbled together in a cup, from which one of the pieces has gone. Through this outlet ran the Whunny, that turned the saw-mill wheel, and a dusty road twisted out of it to the south. Fifty years ago, when every other room had its hand-loom, and thousands of weavers lived and died Thoreaus without knowing it, the cup overflowed and left several houses on the top of the hill. The skeletons of some of these shivering dwellings still stand, choked in an overgrowth of weeds and currant-bushes, and occasionally one is occupied by some needy person, who, during the heavy snowstorms, takes a spade inside with him at nights to dig himself out in the morning. Then he is blown down the hill to his work. There were wintry mornings when Thrums,

viewed from the top of the ridge, was but two gaunt church steeples and a dozen red stone walls standing out of a snow-heap. Weavers in the second storey walked out of their windows instead of down the outside stair that gave them a private door, and, looking about them for the quarry that was their great landmark, fell into buried hen-roosts, where they sat motionless till they saw what had happened to them. . . . The square is Thrums's heart. From it a road to the north climbs straight up the bowl, as if anxious to get out of it. When most of the houses near this thoroughfare were put up, it had not struck the builders to take it into account, and many houses were only approachable by straggling paths that doubled round little gardens, and became in winter tributaries of the Whunny. There were houses that were most easily reached by scaling dykes. The main road comes to a sudden stop at the rim of the bowl, short of breath, or frightened to cross the common of whin and broom that bars the way to the north, with toadstools only to show that this has once been a forest, and slippery roots pressing up the turf, the ribs of the earth showing. Over this common, one end of which, lapping into the valley, has been converted into an overflow cemetery, there are many cart-tracks that in combination would be a road."

The consciousness of the difference between the real and the ideal which comes to the artist when he is drawing an ideal picture of a rather commonplace scene is often present with Barrie. We have heard

his warning about Marywell brae, but in Tommy's disenchantment after he arrived in Thrums there is the very view of the subject which I have been trying to enforce adroitly presented. You remember how Tommy had boasted to Shovel about the beauties of Thrums as these had been described to him by his mother and how Elspeth and he had expected to find such wonders there :

“They went first into the Den, and the rocks were dripping wet, all the trees, save the firs, were bare, and the mud round a tiny spring pulled off one of Elspeth's boots.

“‘Tommy,’ she cried, quaking, ‘that narsty puddle can't not be the Cuttle Well, can it?’

“‘No, it ain't,’ said Tommy, quickly, but he feared it was.

“‘It's c-c-colder here than London,’ Elspeth said, shivering, and Tommy was shivering too, but he answered, ‘I'm—I'm—I'm warm.’

“The Den was strangely small, and soon they were on a shabby brae where women in short gowns came to their doors and men in nightcaps sat down on the shafts of their barrows to look at Jean Myles' bairns.

“‘What does yer think?’ Elspeth whispered very doubtfully.

“‘They're beauties,’ Tommy answered, determinedly.

“Presently Elspeth cried, ‘Oh, Tommy, what a ugly stair! Where is the beauty stairs as is wore outside for show?’

"This was one of them and Tommy knew it. 'Wait till you see the west town end,' he said bravely; 'it's grand.' But when they were in the west town end, and he had to admit it, 'Wait till you see the square,' he said, and when they were in the square, 'Wait,' he said huskily, 'till you see the town-house.' Alas, this was the town-house facing them, and when they knew it, he said hurriedly, 'Wait till you see the Auld Licht Kirk.'

"They stood long in front of the Auld Licht Kirk, which he had sworn was bigger and lovelier than St Paul's, but—well, it is a different style of architecture, and had Elspeth not been there with tears in waiting, Tommy would have blubbered. 'It's—it's littler than I thought,' he said desperately, 'but—the minister, oh, what a wonderful big man he is!'"

And even the minister was a disappointment.

How true all this is and how very real is Tommy's last condition of disenchantment, when he sobs: "I bounced so much about the Thrums folk to Shovel, and now the first day I'm here I heard myself bouncing about Shovel to Thrums folk, and it were that what made me cry. Oh, Elspeth, it's —— it's not the same what I thought it would be!"

I'm afraid that most admirers of Barrie who are rash enough to make a pilgrimage to Kirriemuir thinking thus to visit Thrums will exclaim with Tommy that "it's not the same what I thought it would be." Yet, so strong is the modern craze for identifying actual places with fictitious ones that

we need not be surprised if the name Kirriemuir should in time be superseded by Thrums. There have been similar cases before. One occurs to me at the moment. Sir Walter Scott in “Old Mortality” christened beautiful Craignethan and its castle, “Tillietudlem,” and to-day you would ask in vain for the former, while the latter ungainly name flares in great letters at the Railway Station. So far as names go Thrums is a poor substitute for Kirriemuir. Thrums means the ends of webs, and as such is a very apt name for a weaving community, though I remember a local poet lamenting its choice in some verses with the refrain,

“Thrums are but orras, the ends o’ a wab.”

BARRIE AND
HIS CONTEMPORARIES

BARRIE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

IT is Mr Barrie's good fortune that in his case the critical faculty exists alongside of the creative ability. To re-read his early critical articles in the reviews is to realise that had he never made his mark as the creator of Thrums he could scarce have failed to establish an enviable reputation as a widely read and penetrating critic of literature. The articles referred to are chiefly valuable to-day as showing how Mr Barrie esteems certain of his contemporaries, and together with a series of notable passages from these contributions the reader may also account it interesting to have reproduced a few paragraphs embodying the opinions of Mr Barrie's contemporaries on his own achievements.

This view of Mr Kipling's work, taken from an article entitled "Mr Kipling's Stories," contributed by Mr Barrie to the *Contemporary Review* of March 1891, is very interesting: "He owes nothing to any other writer. No one helped to form him. He never imitated, preparatory to making a style for himself. He began by being original, and probably when at school learned caligraphy from copy lines of his own invention. If his work suggests that of any other novelists, it is by accident; he would have written thus if they had never existed.

By some he has been hailed as a Dickens, which seems mere cruelty to a young man. A Dickens should never have been expected. He must come as a surprise. He is too big to dream about. But there is a swing, an exuberance of life in some of Mr Kipling's practical jokes that are worthy of the author of "Charles O'Malley." Rather let us say that certain of Lever's roaring boys are worthy of Mr Kipling. 'The Taking of Lungtungpen,' and 'The Man who would be King,' are beyond Lever; indeed, for the second of these two stories, our author's masterpiece, there is no word but magnificent."

"George Meredith's Novels" was the title of a critical article contributed by Mr Barrie to the *Contemporary Review* in October 1888. From this we take the following characteristic passage:—

"Were I to pick out Mr Meredith's triumphs in phrase-making I could tattoo the *Contemporary* with them—to use one of his own phrases. He has made it his business to pin them to his pages as a collector secures butterflies. He succeeds, I believe, in this perilous undertaking as often as he fails. He must have the largest vocabulary of any living man. It is told of a great newspaper editor that he had a contributor with a curious craze for introducing the latest thing in felt hats into his articles. A hundred times the editor struck the felt hats out, and a time came when he dreamt nightly that his contributor had outwitted him. Mr Meredith seems to have similar nightmares about the commonplace, and undeniably

the phraseology which he offers as a substitute strews the reader's path with stones."

Writing on Thomas Hardy and his novels in the *Contemporary Review* for July 1899, Mr Barrie says:—

"There is a public that compares Mr Hardy, when he is writing of young ladies, with the conjurer who brings strange things out of an empty box.

"There are clever novelists in plenty to give us the sentimental aspect of country life, and others can show its crueller side. Some paint its sunsets, some never get beyond its pig-troughs or its ale-houses; many can be sarcastic about its dulness. But Mr Hardy is the only man among them who can scour the village and miss nothing; he knows the common as Mr Jefferies knew it, but he knows the inhabitants as well as the common. Among English novelists of to-day he is the only realist to be considered, so far as life in country parts is concerned."

Barrie's admiration for R. L. Stevenson rises almost to a passion, and never has any author received from a contemporary, as great as himself, but in a different way, so beautiful a tribute as that which is dedicated to Stevenson in the chapter of "Margaret Ogilvy" entitled "R. L. S." The chapter in question is a perfect gem, and one cannot quote any part of it and hope to convey an adequate suggestion of the rare spirit with which it is written. The death of Stevenson was one of the few events

that have moved Barrie to poetry, and the following lines from "Robert Louis Stevenson: Scotland's Lament," which he contributed to the *Bookman* in January 1895, may be aptly quoted here:—

"Her hands about her brows are pressed,
 She goes upon her knees to pray,
 Her head is bowed upon her breast,
 And oh, she's sairly failed the day.

Her breast is old, it will not rise,
 Her tearless sobs in anguish choke,
 God put his fingers on her eyes,
 And then it was her tears that spoke.

'I've ha'en o' brawer sons a flow,
 My Walter mair renown could win,
 And he that followed at the plough,
 But Louis was my Benjamin.

'Ye sons wha do your little best,
 Ye writing Scots, put by the pen,
 He's deid, the ane abune the rest,
 I winna look at write again.'

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'The lad was mine!' erect she stands,
 No more by vain regrets oppress't,
 Once more her eyes are clear; her hands
 Are proudly crossed upon her breast."

“Mr Baring-Gould’s Novels” was the title of an article contributed by Mr Barrie to the *Contemporary Review* for February 1890. The following is an interesting extract:—

“Of our eight or ten living novelists who are popular by merit, few have greater ability than Mr Baring-Gould. His characters are bold and forcible figures, his wit is as ready as his figures of speech are apt. He has a powerful imagination, and is quaintly fanciful. So enormous and accurate is his general information that there is no trade or profession with which he does not seem to be familiar. So far as scientific knowledge is concerned, he is obviously better equipped than any contemporary writer of fiction. Yet one rises from his books with a feeling of repulsion, or at least with the glad conviction that his ignoble views of life are as untrue as the characters who illustrate them. Here is a melancholy case of a novelist, not only clever but sincere, undone by want of sympathy. . . . But ‘Mehalah’ is still one of the most powerful romances of recent years.”

In a charming introductory note to a very charming book, “The Grandissimes,” by George W. Cable, Mr Barrie writes in his most characteristic vein. He is a warm admirer of Mr Cable’s beautiful stories of Creole life, but his “note” in this instance refers rather to the characters of “The Grandissimes” than to Mr Cable’s books in general. The following sentence may, however, be quoted: “Mr Cable is the impassioned advocate of the rights of the black

man, who has surely never had such an artist for champion as here, in the story of *Bras-Coupé*; yet I like him best when his one arm protects some poor wounded quadroon, and he is fighting for her with the other."

Mr William Archer, writing of the letters of Stevenson, says :

"The following, addressed to Mr Barrie in 1892, seems to me no less admirable for insight than for modesty. It reminds one of Scott's praise of Jane Austen:—

" 'There are two of us now that the Shirra might have patted on the head. And please do not think when I seem thus to bracket myself with you that I am wholly blinded with vanity. Jess is beyond my frontier line; I could not touch her skirt; I have no such glamour of twilight on my pen. I am a capable artist; but it begins to look to me as if you were a man of genius. Take care of yourself for my sake.'

" 'This is truly felt and nobly expressed. There is a touch of the miraculous in Mr Barrie's endowment that did not enter into Stevenson's. One may recognise this without placing Barrie higher than Stevenson, just as one may recognise Jane Austen's peculiar genius without placing her higher than Walter Scott.'

Stevenson thought "*The Little Minister*" should have ended badly. Writing to Mr Barrie, under date of November 1, 1892, he declares :

"We all know it did; and we are infinitely grateful to you for the grace and good feeling with

which you lied about it. If you had told the truth, I for one could never have forgiven you. As you had conceived and written the earlier parts, the truth about the end, though indisputably true to fact, would have been a lie, or what is worse, a discord in art. If you are going to make a book end badly, it must end badly from the beginning. Now your book began to end well. You let yourself fall in love with, and fondle, and smile at your puppets. Once you had done that your honour was committed—at the cost of truth to life you were bound to save them.”

Mrs Oliphant was one of Barrie's warmest admirers, and the esteem was mutual, as he wrote of her books in terms of sincerest praise before he had done anything to bring him into her notice or to earn her friendship. Writing of “A Window in Thrums” in *Blackwood's Magazine*, Mrs Oliphant said:

“We follow the homely record with an interest which the most sensational drama could not surpass. We feel that something like extravagance seems to steal into the words with which we describe this book. But no book could be more deeply instinct with the poetry of real feeling, in which no fiction is, though it requires something which can only be called genius to reveal it to the world.”

Here is a very interesting little reminiscence from an article by Mr A. T. Quiller-Couch (“Q”), entitled “Mr Barrie's ‘Sentimental Tommy’: A Causerie,” contributed to the *Contemporary Review*:—

“Matrimony by advertisement is popularly supposed to lack glamour; and I feel a reasonable shy-

ness in confessing that my introduction to the most romantic of all my literary loves was brought about by a Press cutting agency. Sometime in the winter of 1887-88 I received a parcel of cuttings, which included one from the *St James's Gazette*, entitled 'Meade *Primus* to his Proud Parent.' The reader will find something very much like it by turning to chap. xx. of his copy of 'My Lady Nicotine,' by J. M. Barrie. At this time, however, and for a year or two after, I did not know the author's name; I only knew that this man's humour differed in a subtle way from other men's humour, and hoped that when next he set forth to write about boys I might be there to read.

"A year or two after it became a fairly common experience of mine to find myself waiting for a few minutes in a certain publisher's room. In the bookcase stood a copy of 'When a Man's Single,' published in the autumn of 1888. By this time Mr Barrie's name was beginning to be noised abroad, and I took down the volume with curiosity. The copy belonged, or had belonged to, an eminent novelist, who had passed it on to the publisher, no doubt with the kindly purpose of calling his attention to the work of this young man. I wonder how often I began to read that book. 'One still Saturday afternoon, some years ago, a child pulled herself through a small window into a kitchen in the Kirk Wynd of Thrums. . . .' It grew to a point of honour to begin at the very beginning, and always the interruption came before I reached the end of

chap. ii. Months passed, and I read the 'Auld Licht Idylls' and 'A Window in Thrums,' and underwent their spell, but still without guessing that this master of our hearts, the creator of Jess and Leeby and the wonderful world of Thrums, was also the writer who had tickled my lungs with the economics of Meade *Primus*. The first glimmer of enlightenment came at length with a determined perusal of the book which had baffled me so often, and was confirmed in April 1890 by 'My Lady Nicotine.'"

Mr David Christie Murray is a "brither Scot," but evidently a whole-hearted admirer of J. M. Barrie. I use "but" deliberately, for nothing is more absurdly wrong than Mr Murray's assertion that the fame of Barrie and Maclaren and other Scottish writers is due in large degree to the great number of Scotsmen on the English Press, who have trumpeted their fellow-countrymen. It is no mere opinion, but a matter of fact, capable of proof, that Mr Barrie's severest critics have always been his own countrymen. Mr Murray is also wrong in bracketing Barrie with George Macdonald and declaring the latter his master. Barrie is so essentially distinct from Dr Macdonald in nearly every phase of his art that it is surprising to find so shrewd a judge as Mr Murray confusing the two. The following judgment of Barrie is extracted from Mr Murray's frank and unconventional volume, "My Contemporaries in Fiction": "I think his greatest charm lies in the fact that he is at once old and new fashioned. He loves to deal with a bygone form of life, a form of life which

he is too young to remember in all its intricacies, whilst he is not too young to have heard of it plentifully at first hand, or to have known many of its exemplars. Few things of so happy a sort can befall a child of imagination as to be born on such a borderland of time. About him is the atmosphere of the new, and dotted every here and there around him are the mementoes of the old—a dying age, which in a little while will cease to be, and is already out of date and romantic. Steam and electricity and the printing-press, and the universal provider and the cheap clothing ‘emporium,’ have worked strange changes. It was Mr Barrie’s fortune to begin to look on life when all these changes were not yet wrought; to bring an essentially modern mind to bear on the contemplation of a vanishing and yet visible past, to live with the quaint, yet to be able by mere force of contrast, to recognise its quaintness, and to be in close and constant and familiar touch with those to whom the disappearing forms of life had been wholly habitual. That the mere environment thus indicated was the lot of hundreds of thousands makes little difference to the special happiness of the chance, for, as I have said already, we can’t all be persons of genius, and it is only to the man of genius that the good fortune comes home.”

That shrewd literary critic, Mr Augustine Birrell, wrote of Barrie in the following glowing manner in one of his delightful “causeries” in the *Speaker* ten years ago:—

“What has happened so often before is happen-

ing now. Everybody is reading 'A Window in Thrums' and 'Auld Licht Idylls.' The instantaneous popularity of these two books is a beautiful thing. The author has conceded nothing to the public taste. May he never do so ! He has been inflexible and resolute, an artist from first to last. Of sentiment, that odious onion, not a trace is to be found in these sweet-smelling pages. But tragedy is there, and pathos well-nigh unbearable, and humour abundant, inevitable, yet always surprising, so cunningly is it hid."

Sir George Douglas, Bart., contributed to *Good Words* for March, 1899, a very pleasant appreciation of Barrie and his books. The following extract from this will no doubt be read with interest :—

"The phenomenal success of Mr Barrie's books is a healthy and hopeful 'sign of the times.' There could not well be a greater contrast to all that we call 'decadent,' '*fin de siècle*,' than is supplied by his work. And whilst other novelists are winning their successes by telling us that the 'old order' has had its day, it is somewhat reassuring to find genius of the brightest enlisted on the side of that old order. It is probable that, in order to be healthy, literature must be catholic, experimental—a free expression of the workings of the human mind. It deals legitimately with novel, even with daring, phases of thought. But there are those among us who recognise in certain tenets of the old order the very rock on which our social life is founded. To these tenets has Mr Barrie ever been true—a fact which, at a period when individualism at war with the

social order has become too much a favourite subject with our novelists, would suffice of itself to give to works such as his an unique and special value."

We could not close this chapter without quoting a few lines from the article entitled "The Novels of J. M. Barrie," which Mr S. R. Crockett contributed to the *Bookman* in November 1894. "Mr Barrie," he says, "is like the King of France who kept back the deluge by getting himself named the 'well-beloved,' with this difference that the writer of the 'Window' deserves the name. Yet I read oftenest in the 'Idylls,' because there is no forlorn laying away of all the beloved—Jess, Hendry, Leeby, among the standing stones of the windy hill; and, above all, no Jimmy coming over the commonty, looking behind him like a hunted thing. For, as I read the 'Window' I am haunted by the thought of those two chapters at the end of the book, and they are to my heart like going about a house where in one of the white unentered rooms a babe lies dead."

Further on the writer advances a very interesting view of Barrie's books: the fact that he seems to find it no difficult task to forget much of their contents and is as delighted when he takes them up again as if he were reading them for the first time. On which point he goes on to observe: "So it is easy to see what a great thing it is to forget Mr Barrie's books, in order that one may begin and go over the whole from the beginning. It even pleasures me to find that he says the same thing over and over again, as though he had forgotten it himself."

THE SCOTS TONGUE IN
BARRIE'S BOOKS

THE SCOTS TONGUE IN BARRIE'S BOOKS

MUCH of Barrie's early success with his dialect stories was due to the fact that he had, in the most artistic manner, produced an Anglicised form of the Scots tongue which was readily understood by English readers. Some of his Scottish contemporaries have used such "braid Scots" that their writings are unintelligible to the average Englishman. Others have confined themselves so largely to a peculiar local dialect that they do not even appeal to a general Scots audience. Take "Johnnie Gibb o' Gushetneuk," for instance, or "Tammas Bodkin's" writings; these could not be universally read in Scotland; and truth to say S. R. Crockett's earlier dialect stories are difficult reading to many of his own countrymen. Even R. L. Stevenson occasionally introduced paragraphs so broad and racy that not one in a hundred English readers can be expected to guess at their meaning, and a very fine book by Halliday Rogers, entitled "Meggot's-brae," is so full of old Scots and localisms that its failure to interest English readers is not surprising. It is entirely to Barrie's credit, then, that, by a sparing use of Scottish idioms, and an ingenious blending of common English, he has produced a form of written Scots which is at once easily under-

stood by all readers, and is truthfully suggestive of the mother-tongue of his characters.

Yet, scattered throughout his books, are a number of words which require more than a mere guess to understand their full meaning. All that the present writer in this chapter has sought to do is to bring together these rather unusual words and phrases, as well as a few others which seem worthy of some attention, and to explain them as fully as need be, in the hope of thus assisting the non-Scottish reader in his study of Barrie's works. The difficulty has not been to find words, but rather to keep the list down to the smallest limit, and wherever the context has made the meaning of an unusual word clear beyond doubt, it has not been added to this list, though several here appear which, while fairly obvious of meaning, are of themselves interesting enough to warrant remark.

It should be pointed out to the English reader—and to some Scots, mayhap—that the Scottish tongue is no mere dialect. Unlike the dialects of provincial England, it is not badly spoken English. Often it is purer Anglo-Saxon than English itself, and the great majority of auld-farrant Scots words will be found to have a synonym, if not a derivative, in Anglo-Saxon. For Jamieson, perhaps the greatest authority on the subject, contends that the Scottish Language is not derived from Anglo-Saxon, but is an individual tongue, derived, like Anglo-Saxon itself, from the ancient Gothic. The question is much too wide to be discussed here, but the

fact that Jamieson's "Dictionary of the Scottish Language" extends to four large quarto volumes, each containing seven hundred odd pages, and, at that, is by no means complete, suggests that the dignity of the Scots tongue is something more than that of a mere dialect.

ANOWER.—"Ye'll gang anower" ("The Last Night," *W. in T.*).

ATOWER.—"To ging atower to the T'nowhead" ("Courting of T'nowhead's Bell," *A. L. I.*).

These two words are used indiscriminately by the novelist, and though it might seem they convey the same idea, there is a real distinction between them. "Atower" is best translated as over or across. To "ging atower" is to go over; to "come in atower" is to come over. A housewife would say to a guest who was sitting near the door on a cold night: "Come (or perhaps "come in") atower to the fire, man." My impression is that, properly applied, atower should mean "out-over," and anower "in over." Thus "ging atower the door," addressing a person inside the house, or "come anower," addressing a person standing outside the door.

BASS.—"Beat her bass" (chap. ii., *M. O.*).

A bass is a doormat. From the name of the fibre.

BESOM.—"And clutched the besom" (chap. viii., *M. O.*).

This is pure Anglo-Saxon for a broom, in which sense it is here used. But an unruly girl is often

called a besom in Scotland, and occasionally a faggot.

BEN.—Ben the house (see “but”).

BILBIE and SILVENDY.—“Something like ‘bilbie’ or ‘silvendy’” (chap. vi., *M. O.*).

BILBIE.—“May find bilbie in queer places” (chap. viii., *L. M.*).

Bilbie and Silvendy are two “auld farrant” words which Margaret Ogilvy wouldn’t explain to her son; but he had no difficulty in guessing at them for all that. Bilbie is a very ancient word, originally meaning a residence or shelter, but subsequently to give quarter or encouragement. At all events “no bilbie” means no quarter, or no encouragement. “Silvendy” means to protect oneself. Yet a good coat may be “silvendy”; so, too, a strong table! Barrie is also justified in using it as “it’s no very silvendy” (safe). By which token it will be concluded the word is rather wide in meaning.

BUCKIES.—“They were as like as buckies after that” (chap. x., *S. T.*).

Buckie is the East of Scotland name for the whelk. In the West, and especially on the Clyde, “wulk” is the word that serves in the vernacular.

BUT.—“The gossip that was going on but the house” (“On the track of the Minister,” *W. in T.*).

“But and ben” is a very common expression in all parts of Scotland, applied to houses. “A but and ben” means a house of only two rooms. In some parts of Scotland—in the West at all events—you seldom hear such a phrase as that quoted, and

"ben" is used indiscriminately. Thus: "come ben the hoose," or "I'm going ben the hoose," meaning one is going into the other room or other side of the house. Originally the but and ben parts of a house were very distinct. Thus Sir J. Carr in his "Caledonian Sketches": "A tolerable hut is divided into three parts; a butt, which is the kitchen; a benn, an inner room; and a byar, where the cattle are housed." That is to say, the ben opened off the but, and in some houses a third room opened off the ben, this being called far ben. In Ross's "Helenore" we have the following:—

"Lindy, who was into the house him lane,—
Lifts up his head, and looking *butt* the floor,
Sees Bydby standing just within the door."

Strictly speaking, the but is the first room entered from the outer doorway, and any room opening off it is the ben. But when the house consists of several apartments, and the entrance to each is from a common hall or lobby, the better side of the house is called the ben, and the kitchen side the but. It is in this sense that Barrie uses the two words. "Far ben" also means very intimate.

CA'MING.—"To watch her ca'ming and sanding and stitching" (chap. i., *M. O.*).

A soft blue stone used by Scots housewives for rubbing on doorsteps is known as "blue ca'm." Hence "ca'ming."

CHIEF.—"Him and the minister's chief, ye ken" ("On the track of the Minister," *W. in T.*).

Chief here conveys the idea of intimacy. It is

very commonly used in Scotland, and is varied in different parts with "great" and "pack." "Jean and Jock are awfu' great, I'm thinking," would in the West of Scotland mean that they were very friendly, very intimate. "Gey pack" would also express the same idea.

CLASHES and CLAVERS.—"In the Clashes and Clavers of Thrums" (chap. xi., *L. M.*).

Clashes means idle talk, and clavers means the same. A clasher is a tale-bearer, or tattler :

"As tales are never held for fack
That clashers tell." —*Picken's Poems.*

CLECKIT.—"It just made me waur (worse) than ever; for when I had counted the twenty I said a big damn, thoughtful-like, and syne out jumpit three little damns, like as if the first one had cleckit in my mouth" (chap. xix., *S. T.*).

Cleckit means hatched. A "clockin' hen" is a hen sitting on eggs, and is applied especially to broody hens. A brood of chickens is called a cleckin. Thus the simile here employed by the author is very striking. The word is not peculiar to Scots, but occurs in Provincial English.

COUTHIE.—"I mean she was couthie" (chap. vi., *L. M.*).

COWDIE.—"A saft cowdie sweet dingon" (chap. xxxi., *L. M.*).

Couthie and couth mean loving, affectionate, pleasant, agreeable, when applied to people. "A couthie couple," for example. The negative form uncouth is in current use in the English language. Cowdie

is a local form of couth, applied more particularly to the weather and things inanimate. In the above phrase it implies a pleasant shower (of rain).

Cow.—“Oh they cow” (chap. iv., *M. O.*).

Possibly from the French *coup*, which is used in Scotland as to throw down, and is pronounced cowp. “Cow” means to cut, and also to outdo, as by a great stroke. Thus, “cow my hair,” and “that cows a’.” Barrie here uses it in the latter sense. Cow has yet another meaning, and is good English, as in this line from Burns:—

“The bauldest o’ them a’ he *cow’d*;

where it signifies to make afraid, or to daunt.

CURRAN.—“For a curran days” (“On the track of the Minister,” *W. in T.*).

This is more correctly “curn,” meaning a small but indefinite number or quantity. One would talk of a “curn brose” as readily as a “curn folk.” A curn and a pickle express much the same idea of quantity. The word also means a grain of corn, or any grain. Manzy, mask, puckle and hantle, all words suggestive of varying quantities, are explained in that splendid chapter, “Of four ministers who afterwards boasted that they had known Tommy Sandys,” in “Sentimental Tommy.”

DANDER.—“Was a dander through the kirkyard” (“A very old family,” *A. L. I.*).

A dander is a stroll. But dander in the vulgar sense of temper is also used in Scotland, just as in Ireland. “That raised the dander of M’Carthy.”

DEVE'S.—“To deve's to death about it” (“The statement of Tibbie Birse,” *W. in T.*).

To deve is to deafen. There was an old Scots lady who was a child in the days of John Knox, and at her end Claverhouse (generally called Clavers) was in the full tide of his career. “When I cam' into the warl’,” she said, “Knox was deven' us wi' his clavers (talk), and noo that I'm gaen oot o't, Clavers is deven' us wi' his knocks.”

DIVETS.—“Whose roof was of ‘divets’” (“A very old family,” *A. L. I.*).

A divet, or divot as it is more generally spelt, is an oblong piece of turf or sod, used for thatching and other purposes.

DOITED.—“Look doitedly probably” (chap. i., *M. O.*).

Doited means doted, or foolish. English writers use the word rarely. It occurs in Lamb's essay on “Rejoicings.”

DREE, DREED.—“I must dree my dreed” (chap. xxxv., *L. M.*).

To dree is to suffer, to endure. The following example from “Border Minstrelsy” is a common one: “According to the popular belief, he (Thomas the Rhymer) still *drees his weird* in Fairy Land, and is one day expected to revisit earth.” Dreed is a synonym of weird, which signifies fate. To dree one's weird, or dreed, is to suffer or endure one's fate:—

“But they'll say, She's a wise wife
Thet kens her ain weird.”

—*Ross's Helenore.*

ETTLING.—“ My mother's feet were ettling to be ben (the house)” (chap. i., *M. O.*).

To ettle is to purpose, to intend. Ettling may be translated intending, or even itching. Here it means itching to do a certain thing. A man is ettling to change his residence, another is ettling to get married.

FEIKIENESS.—“ Her feikieness ended in his surrender” (“ Visitors at the Manse,” *W. in T.*).

Fussiness, petty exactness about trifles. Usually spelt fikieness.

FLISKMAHOY.—“ That has mair faith in you than in a fliskmahoy” (chap. vi., *L. M.*).

A giddy, impulsive girl. “ Flisky” signifies unsettled, capricious, flighty.

GAV'LE-END.—“ Against the gav'le-end” (chap. ii., *M. O.*).

Gavle (there is no occasion for Barrie's apostrophe) is simply a corruption of gable.

GEY.—“ Gey auld-farrant-like heroine” (chap. ii., *M. O.*).

Gey auld-farrant, rather old-fashioned.

HALLAN. — “ He crossed the hallan to the kitchen” (chap. xix., *T. and G.*).

A wall or partition in cottages to screen the occupants from the cold air when the door is closed. An outside porch to a cottage, a little hall.

HOAST.—“ And a hoast haunts him ever” (chap. ii., *M. O.*).

Any kind of cough, but especially suggestive of a husky cough. There is a story of a Scottish

nobleman who was troubled with such a cough while at a public dinner. "Who is that?" asked one of the party. "Oh, that's Lord So-and-So," replied his neighbour. "Indeed, I thought he was the Lord of Hoasts," returned the other. The word occurs in provincial English as well as in Scots.

HUNKERING. — "Hunkering at I dree, I dree, I droppit it" ("The House on the Brae," *W. in T.*).

Hunkers means haunches; hence to hunker is to squat on one's heels: a compromise between sitting and standing out of doors, with a view to resting and yet not sitting on the damp earth. In colliery villages especially you will see the men of an evening hunkering at their door sides, or at the "close-mouth." In this case Barrie uses it to describe the mode of sitting down to a street game.

JALOUSED.—"She jaloused the rest" (chap. xxvi., *L. M.*).

To jalousie is to guess shrewdly.

JOUKIT.—"I assure you I joukit back" (chap. viii., *T. and G.*).

To jouk is to duck the head, to dodge. Jink and jenk have nearly the same meaning in the Doric. Children talk of "jenking" the playfellow who is "het" in certain youngsters' games, such as "Hi! Spy!" or "I spy." The distinction between jink and jouk would be that the one means to avoid by getting out of the way entirely, the other by ducking without changing ground.

KISTS.—“The kists of various people” (chap xxxiii., *S. T.*).

All over Scotland a chest is referred to in the vulgar tongue as a kist. In this connection the notorious objection to an organ in a church, as “defying God wi’ a kist o’ whistles,” occurs to the mind. Kist is also a North English word, and sometimes means a coffin.

LIPPIE.—“A lippie of shortbread” (chap. iv., *M. O.*).

A dry measure, now nearly obsolete. It varied greatly according to locality. A lippie of shortbread might be about two pounds. Same as “forpet.” Potatoes are still sold by the lippie in the east of Scotland; meal is sold by the forpet in the west.

MAGRE.—“I couldna hae moved, magre my neck” (chap. xliii., *L. M.*).

This, meaning “in spite of,” comes, of course, from the old French *maigre* (spite), and should be so spelt. It is common enough in Forfarshire, but is seldom heard in Scots or English provincial speech.

MARROWS.—“One bannock is the marrows of another” (chap. vi., *M. O.*).

Marrows here means neighbours, or duplicates. Marrow is also used as a verb, to match, or to mate. It occurs both in Scots and provincial English.

NEIFER.—“You would neifer the world” (chap. iii., *L. M.*).

Neaf, neif, or neive, means the hand, but the best translation of neifer (or niffer) would be to exchange. There is an old Scots rhyme for children:—

“Neivie, neivie, nick nack,
Which hand will ye tak’?
Tak’ the right, tak’ the wrang,
I’ll beguile ye if I can.”

Saying which one hides something in the closed hand behind the back, and then presents both hands closed to the child who has to guess in which is the hidden coin, sweet, or trinket.

ORRA.—“Gey orra put on” (a frequent phrase).

Orra means odd. “An orra man” is a day labourer, not regularly employed. An orra visitor is an occasional visitor. “Gey orra put on” means rather shabbily dressed, with garments that do not match each other.

“Baith lads and lasses busked brawly,
To glour at ilka bonny waly,
And lay out any *orra* bodles
On sma’ gimcracks that pleased their noddles.”

—*Ramsay’s Poems.*

PALAUWAYS.—“At the game of palaulays” (“The House on the Brae,” *W. in T.*).

Palaulays is the Forfarshire name for the game of Hop-Scotch, which is called Peevers in the West of Scotland.

PEERIE.—“Spinning the peerie” (“The House on the Brae,” *W. in T.*).

Peerie or peery is a good English word, more frequently used in Scotland than in England, and means a boy’s top spun with a string.

PERJINK.—“Looking unusually perjink” (“Visitors at the Manse,” *W. in T.*).

Precise, trim, neat, tidy.

REDDING.—“Redding up the garret again” (chap. v., *M. O.*).

To tidy up. To red your hair means to brush and comb it.

RUMELGUMPTION.—“You hinna the rumelgumption to see it” (chap. vii., *L. M.*).

This is another word of Anglo-Saxon origin. It signifies common sense, understanding, “nouse,” and is sometimes spelt rumgumption or rummilmumption.

“They need not try thy jokes to fathom,
They want rumgumption.”—*Ross's Helenore.*

SCUNNER.—“His heart took mair scunner” (chap. vi., *L. M.*).

In Anglo-Saxon scunning signifies abomination. In the Scots tongue to take a scunner of anything means to take a loathing of it. An objectionable man would be referred to as “a scunner.”

SEPAD.—“An I sepad it's there yet” (“A Magnum Opus,” *W. in T.*).

Here is a phrase which Barrie evidently guesses at, or he would not write it so. There is no such word as “sepad.” What is meant is “I'se uphaud,” which, spoken quickly, would be precisely the sound of “I sepad.” “I'se uphaud” means I'll uphold, and it is with that meaning that Barrie uses “sepad,” as he also uses the proper phrase in other places.

SKAILED.—“Was skailed for ever” (chap. x., *S. T.*).

To skail is to spill or to empty. In the above

connection the meaning is the latter. You can skail a can of milk, but a school is said to be skailing when the children are leaving for the day.

SMIT-LITTINS.—“They’re flied to smit their ain littins” (chap. xl., *L. M.*).

To smit is to infect. “Littins” is, of course, merely a shortening of “little ones.” Thus “They are afraid to infect their own little ones.” Smittle is infectious :—

“The covetous infatuation
Was smittle out o’er all the nation.”

—*Ramsay’s Poems.*

The word is Anglo-Saxon.

SNOD.—“An very snod he is” (“On the Track of the Minister,” *W. in T.*).

Snod is common to Provincial speech, but especially in Scots dialect. As a verb it means to make trim or neat; as an adverb or adjective, neat, trim, tidy.

SOSH.—“And making a bolt for it to the ‘Sosh’” (“Lads and Lasses,” *A. L. I.*).

In many Scottish villages the Co-operative Store is known as the “Sosh,” presumably from the occurrence of that syllable in “association,” and the common habit of all racy speech is to seize a short word to represent a popular institution. In English villages it is called “the Co-op.”

STOCKY.—“A tasty stocky” (chap. vi., *L. M.*).

A tidy-looking woman, in Forfarshire. In Fife-shire a stockie is a cheese, or a fish sandwich.

TAWPIE. — "The daring tawpie" (chap. ix., *L. M.*).

As a rule tawpie or taupie signifies a foolish, thoughtless, young woman, but it is often applied to a spoilt child, or even a petted dog. Where a Lancashire person would say, "Isn't she a maudie?" a Scot would say, "Isna she a tawpie?"

THIEVAL.—"A porridge thieval" ("Dead this twenty years," *W. in T.*).

This is a Provincial term for the stick used to stir porridge or broth. It is common enough in the North of England, and in Forfarshire and the East of Scotland it is frequently used; but in the West few people would know its meaning, the word there used being "spurtle," which is also known in some parts of England.

THOLE.—"I canna thole 'im" ("A humorist on his calling," *W. in T.*).

To thole is to endure, to suffer. The word is not peculiar to Scottish speech, though it is seldom heard in England. In Scots law it is provided that a man having "once tholed the Assize" cannot be retried: that is to say that even a prisoner discharged with "not proven" cannot be retried though absolute evidence of his guilt is forthcoming.

THRANG.—"I suppose you are terribly thrang" (chap. vi., *M. O.*).

Thrang, of course, is simply throng, and "terrible thrang" means awfully busy. Terrible is more commonly used throughout the East of Scotland

than in the West, where *gey* is the word most used. But *gey*, meaning rather, or even very, is common to the whole country.

THRAWN.—“To look thrawn” (chap. vii., *T. and G.*).

To look thrawn is to appear cross, or sour. The word also means twisted. It would be applied to a person with a twisted mouth: *e.g.* Stevenson’s powerful story “Thrawn Janet.”

THRIP.—“Thrip down the throat” (“Thrums,” *A. L. I.*).

A word very generally in use throughout Scotland, but here spelt incorrectly. It is common to the Provincial speech of Britain and means to assert or maintain persistently. Scott spells it more accurately in “The Antiquary”: “He had amaist flung auld Caxon out o’ the window . . . for *threeping* he had seen a ghaist at the Humlock-Knowe.” It is also used as a noun. Thus: “I had privately a kind of *threap* that the brandy should be yours” (Carlyle in Froude’s “Carlyle in London”).

THROUGH OTHER.—“He was through other till the knot was tied” (chap. xxxiv., *S. T.*).

THRO’ITHER.—“A reputation of being thro’ither” (chap. xiv., *S. T.*).

This term, rendered by the author two ways, has different meanings in the East and West of Scotland. Barrie uses it as signifying that the person to whom it is applied is mentally confused. In the West it suggests a wild, mischief-loving nature, and

as spoken there would be rendered phonetically "throother."

VENT.—"The spare bedroom vent" ("On the Track of the Minister," *W. in T.*).

This, of course, is good English for chimney; but the word is more commonly used in Scotland than in England.

WEEL FAURED.—"But what she's weel faured" ("The Power of Beauty," *W. in T.*).

Well favoured.

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[His weekly column, "A Modern Peripatetic," appeared every Thursday, his "special" on Monday; but both were reprinted in the *Weekly Supplement* issued with the *Journal* on Friday and Saturday. The dates given below for the special contributions published during 1883 refer to Friday's or Saturday's *Supplement*. Very occasionally an article bearing evidence of Mr Barrie's authorship appeared without the familiar signature "Hippomenes." In such cases a question mark has been inserted after the title of the contribution.]

	1883
A Modern Peripatetic (first appearance of this feature)	March 3
Old Taverns	,, 17
The Complete Playgoer: A Study in Tinsel, 1st part, $1\frac{1}{2}$ columns . .	March 31
Tritisms	,, "
Complete Playgoer, 2nd part, $2\frac{1}{4}$ columns	April 7
April	,, "
Complete Playgoer (concluded) 2 columns	,, 14
Lears Fool	,, 21
Blood	,, "
In Memoriam of the St Mary's Ward Conservative Association Dinner,	

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Tuesday, April 17, 1883. (A skit in verse; sixteen stanzas of six lines each. Parody on "After a Famous Victory.")			April	21
Ruts			"	28
Herring			May	5
Ads.			"	12
Male Nursery Maids			June	2
The Maid Re-made (Rational Dress Association)			"	16
The Leafy Month			"	"
Printers' Errors			"	23
Private Theatricals (?)			"	30
A Rural Cricket Match			July	7
Roses			"	14
Ridicule			"	21
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Penury			Aug.	2
Bohemia			"	11
Sportsmen in the North (?) . .			"	17
Literary Tea-Leaves			"	"
Novelists (?)			"	24
Stage Tricks			"	"
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The Stage (?)			Sep.	8
The Third Sex ("They are youthful clergymen as a rule")			"	"
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On Titles (?)			"	"
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Provincial London	„ 25
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Railway Travelling	„ 15
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Startling Disclosures	„ 29
Fine Writing	Oct. 6
Travellers' Tales	„ 14
Principal Boys	„ 20
More Compositors' Freaks	„ 27

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